## INFORMATION REVOLUTION



THE HISTORY OF THE TOLEDO—LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY 1838–2001

BY DAVID M. NOEL





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Donning Company Publishers



Inside the brand new Main Library, 1940. Note the light fixtures that were saved. Today they can be seen throughout the renovated Historic Main Library.

Pages 2 and 3: Helping patrons at the old Main Library.

#### DEDICATION

A library outranks any other one thing that a community can do to benefit its people.

—Andrew Carnegie

This book is dedicated to the residents of Lucas County, Ohio, who have long supported Ohio's first free library.

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The Donning Company/Publishers 184 Business Park Drive, Suite 206 Virginia Beach, VA 23462 Steve Mull. General Manager Dawn V. Kofroth, Assistant General Manager Mary Taylor, Project Director Susan Adams, Project Research Goordinator Jan Marrin, Editor Bessy Bobbutt. Graphic Designer John Harrell, Imaging Arrist Scott Rule, Senior Marketing Coordinator Patricia Peterson, Marketing Coordinator

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## FOREWORD

Clyde S. Scoles, Director, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library

A COMMUNITY MEASURES ITSELF WITH VARYING LEVELS OF CRITERIA. Certain points of interest dictate quality of life and define a standard of fulfillment for a community's residents. Educational opportunities, performing and visual arts, athletic achievements, and even climate contribute to the image of community.

When it comes to cultural sophistication, it is important to note that just because an institution has made a home in the community, it does not guarantee a better quality of life for local residents. To truly enhance quality of life, an institution must serve as a leading force in the community and define priorities. The best institutions enhance the educational process, help businesses prosper, usher in new technology, and provide enjoyment for residents of all ages and backgrounds.

This is not an impossible task. Consider the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library. For one hundred sixty-three years, the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library has served as a pillar of the northwest Ohio community. The library is the center of information and technology for more than 400,000 area residents. As the gold standard for public institutions, the library exemplifies the vision of industrialist Andrew Carnegie and offers free access to all who seek knowledge.

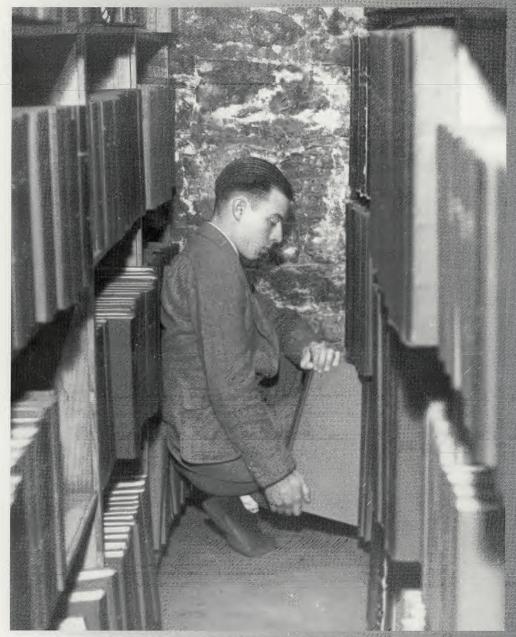
Residents of Lucas County have been privy to a free public library since 1838. The library is an institution embraced by many; circulation and attendance figures rise annually, with more than 6 million books and 3 million visitors moving through our doors in the year 2000.

But more than books, we offer the community educational and enrichment opportunities. From our first branch operation in 1915 at Glenwood School to the recent introduction of the internationally acclaimed JASON Project, the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library has helped northwest Ohio learn and grow. Our ability to provide information, knowledge, and technology is second to none.

Our eighteen branch libraries have spurred the resurgence of neighborhood pride and economic revitalization throughout Lucas County. A library may depend on its community for support, but a vital community leans heavily on its library for vision, leadership, and service.

Perhaps the most valuable asset of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library is one often taken for granted. Our highly trained professional staff makes public service its top priority. Such is not the case with many organizations thriving in today's high-tech world. From the librarian who offers assistance in researching an obscure topic to the circulation clerk who issues a patron's first library card, the personal touch of the library staff has become the hallmark of our longstanding popularity in northwest Ohio.

The library is poised to lead the community through the twenty-first century. This book chronicles our past and offers a glimpse of the future. I hope you view this book as a worthwhile piece of local history and find it enjoyable. And, of course, I hope you utilize your Toledo–Lucas County Public Library.



A patron explores the bound periodicals in the narrow stacks of the old Main Library.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PUBLIC LIBRARIES COULD NOT HAVE DEVELOPED SO SUCCESSFULLY IN Lucas County without the active and substantial work of many people over the years. On a far lesser scale, this account of that library service also rests upon the assistance of many individuals, and I am literally indebted to all of them. Compilers of past annual reports and other official library records, reporters who described library operations over the years, and graduate students who focused on aspects of local library service in their theses—each of these people created the collective written record that is so absolutely vital to later researchers such as myself.

A second group, smaller but just as important to this story, is composed of individuals who gave direct support to me as I researched and wrote this history.

Progress cannot be achieved in an unsupportive environment. Adrienne Noel, my wife, has always provided a strongly supportive and nurturing environment, both psychologically and materially. Her innate personality and abilities, as well as her upbringing, account for most of her nurturing capacity. The fact that she and I first met while both of us worked at the Main Library may have added an extra dimension.

In a sense, research for this history began when Ardath Danford, Margie Malmberg, and Morgan Barclay agreed to hire me in 1972 and thus initiated my professional association with the library in Lucas County. I am most grateful to all three for putting me on a course that worked so well and for enhancing that journey along the way.

Likewise, Clyde Scoles provided later support and encouragement, as well as additional experiences, enabling me to continue my library career for a total of twenty-eight years.

Many library colleagues have helped make my library days enjoyable and productive over the years. I hereby extend a blanket, but no less very sincere, thank you to each and every one of them. In so many individual ways, they helped me prepare this history. My associates in the library's Marketing Department have earned my special gratitude for all they have done as we worked together for the past nineteen years. That support continued right into this work, for Marketing Coordinator Mary Kay Sanford oversaw this publication.

Most recent thanks must go to the entire staff of the Local History and Genealogy Department for their help in the official research behind this publication. Department Manager James C. Marshall and his staff members gave valuable and always courteous assistance to me.

The creation of this history is also due in part to the support of the Library Legacy Foundation and its president, Jamie Black, and Gretchen Gehring, the library's advancement and resource officer.



Circulation desk at the old Main Library, circa 1929.

## INTRODUCTION

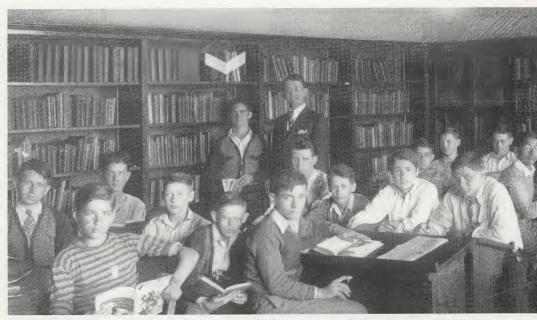
THE STORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE IN LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO, solidly proves that citizens highly value local libraries and are willing to use them and support them with taxes. As such, it is a positive case study of government and citizens working well together and to the satisfaction of the governed.

Several threads run through this account, and I urge you to be conscious of them. First, there are the various basic categories of library users: the browser/reader, the independent learner, the researcher, and the group participant. Their expectations of library service and the libraries' efforts to fulfill that expectation is an ongoing relationship that strongly influences other aspects of public library service.

Second, the evolution of library functions, and the balance among those functions, closely relates to library users. When library service first began in Lucas County, libraries featured closed stacks for nearly all its books. Patrons had to consult a printed list of titles in the collection and request each item they wanted. Furthermore, borrowers could take out only one or two books at a time. Thus, libraries needed a large "reading room" where people could use the books they had requested and couldn't borrow. These reading rooms frequently were better lighted and more comfortably heated than private homes or apartments, so people came and stayed. As private dwellings' lighting and heating standards rose, people preferred to take books home, and the circulation of materials became a major function in the later nineteenth century.

Third, at about this same time, the "open shelf" concept began to replace the "closed stacks," and libraries' layouts needed to provide direct access to most, or all, of the collection. The new layouts also had to include floor space for card catalogs, the newer method of providing a complete listing of a library's collection.

Fourth, the growing presence of encyclopedias, directories, and other nonfiction information sources, combined with the traditional patrons' request for "a good book to read," fostered a need for more reference librarians and resources, which are still a major component of public libraries today.



An eighth-grade class utilizes the Main Library, 1941.

Fifth, another continuing relationship has been that between the library and technology. Furthermore, this particular relationship has a "chicken and egg" nature on many occasions. The printed word on the page and the binding of those pages into books largely determined the physical and organizational layout of libraries in the early days. Subsequently, other print formats evolved and libraries needed to accommodate them, e.g., newspapers and magazines. In the last one-hundred years, libraries added newer nonprint formats, such as player piano rolls, phonograph records, audio cassettes, compact discs, and, most recently, DVDs. The growing presence of computer-based information technologies, and now its near domination of the library scene, happened exactly because of the interrelation between what could be provided and what people wanted.

Sixth, the growth of library professionalism is a trend that has moved in a direction of distinctly greater competency and more demands. For most of the nineteenth century, librarianship was learned on the job; the first U.S. school of library science didn't open until nearly the end of the century. (Melvil Dewey of Dewey Decimal fame opened the first library science school at Columbia University in 1887; Ohio's first library school opened at Western Reserve University in 1904.)



Seventh, other organizations, including businesses, have been competitors of libraries. Some compete in providing the same commodities—reading matter, information—while others offer alternative means of enjoyment, learning, and recreation. Libraries have coped with those competitors rather successfully and have a very respectable "market share." The library and its competitors have coexisted since their initial confrontations and, I predict, will continue to coexist, though the exact nature of their competition may change.

Stability of the local environment has always been an important factor in determining the health of public libraries. The higher the level of stability, the better the condition for the establishment and maintenance of libraries. Closely related is the presence of leisure time. This has been proven by the negative impact of the opposite condition; during each occasion of hard times, especially economic, libraries suffered overall, even though circulation may have risen.

In short, libraries can be viewed not just as books and mortar, but as a mirror, reflecting the societies in which they function. Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, made this very point when he said that he would visit a community's library to get a sense of the entire community itself. The libraries of Lucas County have been privileged to reflect a superior image of superior communities.



The old port, circa 1890.

### CHAPTER 1

# The Beginnings 1838-1873

#### BACKGROUND

THE FORMATION OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY IN LUCAS COUNTY WAS the climax of a story that began in the colonial days. The early white settlers in Lucas County knew of social libraries, subscription libraries, and government-aided libraries in their various New England and middle-colony backgrounds. Entrepreneurs and promoters among them also knew the positive role such libraries could play as communities competed for new settlers and enterprises.

One of these library concepts was the "social library," a private organization that might be a subscription library, joint stock company, or a private club. They were precursors to public libraries in Europe, and immigrants to America brought that concept, and possibly personal experience, with them to the New World. By 1780, fifty-one "social libraries" existed in New England. The key characteristic was that each member paid an annual fee for the right to borrow books from the library's collection. The first library service in Lucas County would be of this type.

The Reverend Thomas Bray sponsored a second interesting colonial precedent for public libraries. For nine years beginning in 1695, this Anglican clergyman established seventy libraries in the American colonies. Half of them were "laymen's libraries," collections given to clergymen who would loan, or even give, the books to their parishioners. Colonial legislators in Maryland and South Carolina even passed laws to maintain the Bray libraries. This effort ceased with the death of Bray in the early eighteenth century, and the collections dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

Probably the most familiar antecedent to modern public libraries is the one Benjamin Franklin organized in Philadelphia in 1730. Franklin headed a group of twelve Philadelphians who combined their personal libraries in one

#### READING PREFERENCES

Overall, the reading public likes to read all sorts of topics. They expect their libraries to provide this wide range of topical material. Therein lies a major challenge for libraries and the people who operate them.

On the one hand, the early social or subscription libraries' clientele favored books that helped with self-improvement or addressed major philosophical or moral issues. History, biography, and travel works were also frequently included in these collections. Contemporary fiction, often termed "trash" or labeled with the generalized and derogatory term of "romance novels," had no place in these libraries, their members believed.

On the other hand, the commercial or so-called "circulating" libraries catered exclusively to the general public's strong preference for contemporary fiction and romance titles. These titles were so popular that a commercial "Book Boat" operated on the Erie Canal between Albany and Buffalo for about twenty years, renting fiction and romance titles by the hour to anxious readers along its route.

Many members of subscription libraries became proponents of publicly supported libraries, so that fiction readers would have access to both fiction and "the better reading." This was frequently linked to the need for school libraries, stocked with the "good books" too, of course. As part of their schooling, children could be taught the "right kind" of reading for their adult lives, according to proponents.

This dichotomy of materials directly impacted libraries' collections the organization of the collections and the role of librarians. Limited funds for collections had to be divided between the fiction and nonfiction categories. Especially in the beginning, the books were more strictly separated between nonfiction reference and circulating fiction. Librarians were expected to help educate patrons to prefer the "better books" over the trash. Modern libraries and librarians cope with this situation yet today.<sup>32</sup> location, thus making all the books available to all members of the group. Actually, this effort lasted only about one year, for some members complained about inadequate care for their books and there was some inconvenience of not having one's books at home.

The concept of book sharing remained a goal of Franklin's, however. In 1731, he organized a subscription library, and in 1742, it was chartered as the Library Company of Philadelphia, the first such library in the New World. Its establishment served as a model for other similar libraries in the colonies.<sup>3</sup>

The evolving industrial economy fostered public libraries. The strengthening urban and industrialization trends in western societies fostered a growth in such occupations as artisans, mechanics, merchants, bookkeepers, engineers, and clerks. These individuals supported subscription libraries and became advocates for public libraries.<sup>4</sup>

One variation on the social libraries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the "mechanics" or "mercantile" library. Local philanthropists sometimes founded these for use by "the people," especially artisans and persons engaged in business. A strong motive of such founders was enlightened self-interest, for such libraries would aid the very laboring classes the founders needed to staff and manage their own enterprises. The formation of these libraries also was proof of an evolving economy, one depending on persons using, and even creating, the tools of the Industrial Age, not just the implements of the earlier

agricultural period. Toledo would have its own mechanics' library as the young settlement gained more persons engaged in such trades.

Another form of pre-public library existed as well: the "circulating library." These libraries were so named because virtually all of their books could be checked out, there were no reference items. Furthermore, there were

no annual membership dues; rather, a variety of retailers operated these libraries as part of their other businesses, such as a general store. The success of these libraries rested upon the type of books offered: contemporary fiction only. They stocked the titles that the general reading public most wanted. These "bestsellers" of their day were not the self-improvement texts or major philosophical works one found in the social libraries. Most members of subscription libraries regarded the circulating libraries with great disgust.

The Bray libraries and other early libraries illustrate one important factor in the establishment of public libraries: the need for community stability. Clearly, there must be stability of adequate funding. There also needs to be stability in the lives of library supporters and users. And, that stability includes long-term residence in a community and leisure time for reading and self-improvement through the printed word.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, many of the white settlers to Ohio brought a desire for libraries with them as they moved west, and they knew how to organize libraries when circumstances permitted. This is evident, as libraries were among the first institutions established in Ohio once a local government was formed. At that time, however, libraries were not free institutions; they were erected and supported by philanthropists or local citizens.<sup>7</sup>

## THE YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION LIBRARY IS FOUNDED

The first library service in Lucas County dates from December 1838, when the Ohio General Assembly granted a charter to the Young Men's Association of Toledo for a "lyceum and public library." This library movement came only a year after Toledo had been officially incorporated on January 7, 1837. At that time, the Young Men's Association Library joined other civic resources: seven hotels, six warehouses, thirty-five stores, two sawmills, four lumber yards, twelve lawyers, three schools, two newspapers, one foundry, and one brickyard.8

At least sixty-six of Toledo's 1,000 to 2,000 residents wanted library resources in their new community, for this was the number of charter members in the association's social library. Technically, the new community asset was a subscription library with members paying an annual fee of two dollars.

The Young Men's Association Library's resources were slim initially; one account credited the library with 500 volumes by 1845, which grew to 800 by 1864. A library-sponsored lecture series and a reading room equipped with magazines and newspapers were other benefits of membership. The library operated a reading room in the Gordon Block at 170 Summit Street, between Madison Avenue and Adams Street. These features helped membership increase to 150 members by 1846.

#### THE LIBRARY HEIPS EARLY COMMUNITY GROWTH

This beginning of library service was one of many efforts Toledoans made to bolster their civic assets in the early days. Joining this list of municipal enhancements, many of which were government financed, were sidewalks along major city streets (1839), a combination regular and volunteer fire department (1837–1862), storm sewers (1848), telegraph connections (1848), gaslights (1857), and streetcars (1862).<sup>12</sup>

Toledo promoters very likely cited their subscription library as one more example of the new city's energy and commitment to even greater urban development. The library, along with the schools, the building lots for churches, the establishment of other cultural institutions, and the active construction of homes and commercial buildings, were all assets to advertise to potential investors and residents.

This collective set of improvements also helped distinguish Toledo from the other settlements along the lower Maumee River in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Austerlitz, East Marengo, Lucas City, Manhattan, Marengo, Maumee, (the first) Oregon, Orleans of the North, and Perrysburg were at various times competitors of early Toledo.<sup>13</sup>

For example, the city's advocates waged an aggressive campaign to attract two canals that were planned for northwest Ohio. Coming from Cincinnati and Fort Wayne, Indiana, these canals were part of the "canal boom" that infected much of the nation following the great success of New York's Erie Canal in 1825. Maumee River settlements fiercely contested to become the northern terminus of these canals. Toledo won the terminus, as it seemed to have the best prospects for future growth and prosperity. The first canal boat from Indiana reached Toledo in May 1843, and the first Cincinnati boat arrived in June 1845. Traffic built swiftly, and 3,753 canal boats departed Toledo for points west and south in 1848.

That same set of civic assets was useful in attracting the other brass rings of development Toledoans sought to catch. Early local promoters of rail-roads—competitors to the canals—bought shares in the Erie & Kalamazoo Railroad and were proud to see train service begin between Toledo and Adrian, Michigan, in 1836. (This was the first railroad company established west of the Allegheny Mountains.) By the 1850s, other railroad lines connected Toledo to Cleveland, Fort Wayne, and Chicago.

Early community leaders worked to develop Toledo's capability as a Great Lakes port as well. A major transshipment hub arose on the peninsula between Swan Creek, which the canal boats used, and the Maumee River. Early railroad tracks also led to this so-called "Middlegrounds" area. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was a bustling and sophisticated transshipment facility. The Owens Corning headquarters currently occupies this site.

Just as the Young Men's Association Library helped promote early Toledo,

the town's success in its first decades brought more support to the library. By 1850, Toledo's population had more than doubled to 3,800, and by 1860, there were 13,768 residents.<sup>15</sup> This helps explain why library membership grew to 500 in the 1860s. The greatly improved transportation networks also allowed the local libraries greater access to regional and national publishing houses for books.

## THE MECHANICS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF TOLEDO IS ESTABLISHED

Typical of other American cities and indicative of the "library spirit" in early Toledo, local mechanics (a nineteenth-century term for a variety of persons who worked with their hands) established their own social library in 1844. The self-proclaimed mission of the Mechanics Library Association was "to diffuse knowledge throughout the mechanical classes; to found lectures on natural, mechanical and chemical philosophy, and other scientific subjects; to create a Library and Museum for the benefit of mechanics, and for the promotion of schools of instruction of mechanics' children. . . . "<sup>16</sup>

According to the group's constitution and bylaws, there was a one-dollar initiation fee and then dues of twenty-five cents per month. Each member could borrow a maximum of two volumes from the collection, and all books were to be returned on or before the first Monday of each month.

No further mention has been found of this organization. Based on the general experience of such social or subscription libraries, it may well have joined with one of the other libraries in the city for a pooling of resources.

#### THE TOLEDO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION IS FORMED

In 1864, national presidential politics reached the local library. Former union general George B. McClellan was the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. McClellan supporters from the Young Men's Association Library jammed an October 1864 library meeting, allegedly intending to use the library's quarters for the McClellan campaign. Republican members, whom local historian Nevin O. Winter maintained were in the majority, resigned from the Young Men's Association Library and founded the Toledo Library Association (TLA) before the end of October. The two organizations coexisted until 1867, when the Young Men's Association Library merged with the Toledo Library Association.<sup>17</sup>

During the period of competition, the Toledo Library Association attracted more members. The TLA board was very pleased with this success, terming the TLA's library "one of the ornaments of Toledo" and congratulating themselves that their new organization far exceeded the Young Men's Association Library in "popularity and usefulness." <sup>18</sup> By the time the two groups united,

the TLA membership had risen to 500 and its collection had grown to more than 4,000 volumes. Another Toledo librarian later cited its annual circulation at 15,000 items. The association had also provided a separate reading room for women, whose annual membership fee was two dollars, while the men's fee had been raised to three dollars.<sup>19</sup>

Members of these two social libraries presumably enjoyed the benefits of membership. But, by the mid-1860s a growing number of members began to regret that their organizations were not helping the majority of Toledo citizens. These members believed that many residents could not afford the annual membership fee and thus could not reap the benefits of membership. This argument gained significance when financial panics swept the country, such as in 1857. (Some members had to drop their memberships in order to meet higher priority expenses.) In such hard times, the knowledge found in books would help people even more, the argument ran.<sup>20</sup>

Critics of the existing system advocated that local governments should support libraries and that these libraries would be truly public by being open to all. A majority of members of the General Assembly agreed in 1853. That year the legislature passed a law authorizing cities and towns to levy taxes in support of public libraries in their jurisdictions and to appoint trustees (in conjunction with the local board of education). The State Librarian of Ohio, writing in 1902 on the development of public libraries in Ohio, credited establishing a public library in Toledo to ... the belief that free libraries sustained by taxation were as necessary educators as free schools.

With this goal clearly defined, local public library advocates from the Toledo Library Association formed a joint committee with the Toledo Board of Education to lobby the state's General Assembly for the necessary legislative action.

#### THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY IS ESTABLISHED

The General Assembly approved such a bill on April 18, 1873, the council of the City of Toledo passed its needed resolution on May 26, and the Public Library of the City of Toledo was officially created.<sup>23</sup> City council also resolved to levy a 0.5-mill property tax for the financial support of the library.<sup>24</sup>

With the legal framework in place, the new public library needed trustees to lead it and a home and resources. Trustees were quickly recruited, and the city council officially named eight trustees on June 2, 1873. The mayor of Toledo was the ninth and ex-officio trustee. The Toledo Board of Education nominated four of the eight municipal trustees. The library board held its first meeting on June 24, 1873. During this formation period, three trustees and some of the library's staff visited the Cincinnati Public Library to gain further knowledge of library operations. <sup>26</sup>

The library's first home was on an upper floor of the King Block commercial building, on the northeast corner of Summit Street and Madison Avenue. It had previously been the home of the Toledo Library Association. This was a central location in the business district and followed the belief that a community's library should be adjacent to the community's principal businesses and government offices. The Toledo Edison Building occupies the site today.<sup>27</sup>

The original Toledo Public Library collection came from two sources. The Toledo Library Association transferred its 4,878 books and several maps and engravings to the newly established public library on September 8, 1873. The

Toledo Board of Education contributed 1,320 books, so the opening day collection totaled 6,198 volumes.<sup>28</sup> The public quickly started borrowing the materials, and the first month's circulation reached 4,500.<sup>29</sup>

The TLA also transferred \$105 in cash and ownership of two lots on Forrer Street. In return, the Toledo Public Library agreed to assume the association's debts. With that final action, the TLA ceased to exist. When the TLA's real estate was sold and its debts were paid, \$333.86 remained for deposit into the Toledo Public L ibraryaccount.<sup>30</sup>

The initial staff, all former employees of the Toledo Li-

brary Association, consisted of Anna B. Carpenter, librarian, who had been the TLA librarian since 1871; two full-time assistant librarians; one part-time librarian; and one janitor.

The library's hours were 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., Mondays through Saturdays, and 1:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. on Sundays. Patrons could borrow one item at a time, except two-volume works could be checked out together. The loan period was two weeks with a two-week renewal permitted. The overdue fine was three cents per day.<sup>31</sup>



The Webster School Library Station, March of 1928. It was replaced by the Lagrange—Central Branch Library in 1934.



## CHAPTER 2

# The Early Years 1874-1890

#### THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY BEGINS

the formal establishment of the Toledo Public Library and its opening to the public on November 3, 1873. One concern was the adoption of proper and effective policies and procedures. Library trustees John Sinclair (the board president), Robert Wason, and William Scott, as well as the first Toledo Public Library librarian, Anna Carpenter, visited the Cincinnati Public Library. Cincinnati's public library began in 1853. The Toledo delegation investigated the operation of that larger and older public library, seeking to benefit from its experience. They also corresponded with other libraries, asking for advice.

The major preparation for opening the Toledo Public Library probably was readying the collection. Assumption of the Toledo Library Association's quarters in the King Block brought with it that group's 4,878 volumes. However, the Toledo Board of Education contributed 1,320 books to the Toledo Public Library, and the books had to be integrated into the former Toledo Library Association's collection by opening day. The volumes were arranged by subject, possibly because it was the system used by the Toledo Library Association and the staff, and many of the patrons would have been familiar with that.<sup>2</sup>

Public libraries of that time issued printed lists of their titles as a common practice. The Toledo Public Library leaders decided to postpone such a publication, anticipating that the collection would grow rapidly and thus make a printed list obsolete very soon. The cost of such a hardbound publication was another reason for delay. As an alternative method of informing readers about new titles, the library subsequently published a list of recent additions to the collection that was published in the local newspaper every month.<sup>3</sup> An initial card catalog was not created at this time either, perhaps because it would have been a very labor-intensive task for the small library staff.<sup>4</sup>

The expected growth of the library's book collection began quickly. In the first year of operation, the Toledo Public Library's holdings expanded by nearly 25 percent. The library purchased 1,262 items and an additional 325 books were donated. Only forty-one volumes were discarded, and four items were reported as lost (and not replaced). The book collection continued to grow in the early years, although individual years saw great fluctuations due to finances. By 1881, the total number of books was 16,036. Just four years later the collection topped 20,000, forcing the reading room to be reduced in size and balconies added for more shelving space. When the Toledo Public Library left the King Block to move into its own building in 1890, the collection numbered 28,499 volumes.

Although the Toledo Public Library opened on November 3, 1873, patrons could only borrow books, for the library's reading room was not available until February 1874. The leaders and library staff needed time to prepare the reading room space for increased public usage and for a larger book collection. Having completed their initial plans, the reading room was again closed in July 1874 to implement the expansion and rearrangement of spaces. The library's Second Annual Report described the improvements: a larger reading room (which measured 18 by 56 feet), a separate reading room (18 by 18 feet for ladies), shelving for 8,000 volumes (which could be expanded to hold 12,000), and a room for the trustees and the librarian that could also be used as a work room.<sup>7</sup>

## FINANCIAL PROBLEMS HOBBLE THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The newly established public library almost immediately ran into the negative effects of the nationwide panic of 1873. This panic has been judged to be the most serious financial crisis of the nineteenth century and second only to the 1930s depression in severity.8 The panic began with the failure of overblown railroad speculations and then spread to all other components of the economy. By the 1870s, Toledo was a major railroad center and highly dependent on rail traffic for its commercial strength. Compounding the panic's impact was Toledo's slow perception of the depression's severity and



thus the belated efforts to cope with worsening conditions.<sup>9</sup> As the panic persisted, growing numbers of community residents had to cope with unemployment, underemployment, and the necessary cutbacks in expenditures. Many could no longer pay city taxes and the city's revenue also declined.

The original municipal legislation founding the library provided funding via a 0.5-mill property tax. Due to the panic, by 1876 an estimated 35 percent of property tax bills were in arrears. That caused a \$3,500 shortfall in the library's budget. During that year, the city council reduced the library's property rate by 40 percent to 0.3 mills. The local economy remained poor in 1877, as did property tax collections, and the city council further reduced the library's tax rate to 0.2 mills.

This multiyear pattern of declining resources had the usual impact on the public library: the book budget was cut, public hours were reduced, and circulation declined. The worst year for the book budget was 1878, when no books were purchased. Patrons donated 341 books that year, the only addi-

The front area stacks of the old Main Library.

tions to the collection. The reading room was closed on Sundays entirely and was open only six hours per day in the summer, which also allowed staffing levels to be cut back. These restrictions were finally restored by 1883.

#### FRANCES D. JERMAIN

Frances D. Jermain was the first dominant personality in the early years of library service in Lucas County. Robinson Locke, editor of *The Blade* and a community leader during Jermain's residency in Toledo, called her "the Mother of Toledo's Public Library." Harvey Scribner, another leader and writer of major Lucas County history of the period, simply described her as "... an ideal librarian." During her service, the library survived its formative years, strengthened its reputation as a valuable community asset, moved from rented quarters into its own building, opened its shelves for patrons to browse directly, and established a children's department.

Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1829 to a Presbyterian minister and his spouse, she later graduated from Ann Arbor College—a rarity for females during that period. Following her husband's death in Chillicothe, Ohio, Jermain moved to Toledo in 1871 with her six surviving children. While raising her children, she also wrote for two local newspapers. The Blade and The Commercial.

Local records disagree slightly about when Jermain joined the staff of the Toledo Library Association. One account claims 1879, while another states 1881. She served as an assistant to Lucy Stevens, the Toledo Library Association librarian from 1875 to 1884, and succeeded Stevens upon her retirement. Jermain would continue in this position until her own retirement due to illness in 1903.

A library publication following her death characterized her as "...a small woman with a scholarly interest, a familiarity with books, a gentle voice, and an honest desire to be of service to library patrons." She quickly became a well-known and popular librarian for the community. One contemporary remembered, "Some of us can... testify to the wonderful change made in that room [the Toledo Public Library reading room] when she became the ruling power. She did not handle books as if they were mere merchandise, but as if each one was a sensible soul, and her knowledge of them was not a superficial one and of their titles only; she knew the books themselves, and was exceedingly happy in characterizing them in a few brief sentences."

Jermain's legacy lived on after her death in August of 1905. The Toledo Public Library was the chief manifestation, of course. Her many contributions were officially recognized in 1917 when one of the five Andrew Carnegie—funded branch libraries in Toledo was named the Jermain Branch.

Jermain's scholarly interests extended beyond the library's walls as well. She researched a book on the history of the alphabet in her later years and it was published posthumously in 1906. In the book, she predicted quite specifically where the earliest written documents would be discovered in the city of Ur of the Chaldees. In 1929, an archaeological expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania found such documents, thanks to Jermain's details.<sup>21</sup>

Circulation was the clearest sign of the hard times. In the first fourteen months of operation, the Toledo Public Library had circulated 72,036 items. Annual circulation increased strongly thereafter, and this momentum of usage drove the 1877 total to 191,691. Then the negative impact of the panic, and the budget cuts that followed, began to show. Annual circulation fell, bottoming out in 1881 at 61,231 items.

During this trying period, Anna Carpenter, the first head librarian of the Toledo Public Library, resigned in 1875 to marry Charles King, a strong local library advocate and president of the former Toledo Library Association. The Toledo Public Library trustees named Carpenter's assistant, Lucy Stevens, as the new librarian.

Compounding the financial difficulties and cutbacks in public service, an old controversy appeared once again. Some residents, including members of Toledo's city council, believed that the public library had given in to providing only trashy literature and romance novels. They maintained that a publicly funded library should nurture the reading of "good literature," preferably nonfiction self-improvement works. The library administration responded. For example, in its annual report for 1880, the administration stated, "The impression however seems to prevail among members of [Toledo common council] that the circulating [sic] of this Library is

almost wholly confined to Prose-Fiction, and if not exerting a baneful influence on the community, is purely a luxury. The circulation compares favorably with other similar institutions, and while Prose-Fiction is largely sought and read, it does not follow that a community is any the worse for it. We can assure you no books of a vicious nature are upon the shelves of the Library." The cost of maintaining the library during the tight circumstances of the panic of 1873 largely explains this criticism at the time. However, the composition of a library's collection and how such resources fit into a public library's mission is a dynamic, ongoing issue.

Despite the ups and downs of the library, both Carpenter and Stevens sought to keep the Toledo Public Library in touch with library development around the nation. While head librarian, each woman traveled to various state and national meetings of librarians, thus learning of trends in library operations and aspects of public service, collection, categorization, and staffing. Most notably, Stevens attended the 1876 Philadelphia meeting where the American Library Association was formed.<sup>12</sup>

## THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY CAMPAIGNS FOR A NEW HOME

Many nineteenth-century public libraries occupied rented quarters in existing buildings during their early years. Likewise, it was common practice for such libraries to seek their own buildings as their usage and book collections both grew. The Toledo Public Library followed that pattern in the 1880s. The library's location in the King Block was proving more and more inadequate. Despite the remodeling and expansion in the 1870s, the space designed to hold 12,000 volumes was jammed with nearly 30,000 items. Circulation was also on the rebound, again breaking 100,000 items annually, which reflected more patrons visiting the library as well. Other people desired to use the library, but its location on an upper floor that lacked elevator service was an obstacle.

Fortunately, the local drive came at a time when Toledo was enjoying much growth as an urban area and when its citizens' morale was high and their outlook enthusiastic. Population growth was perhaps the clearest sign of this upbeat strength. From just over 30,000 people when the Toledo Public Library was founded, the city's population grew to 50,137 in 1880 and 81,434 by the time the new Toledo Public Library building opened in 1890. Impressively, Toledo's population growth rate from 1880 to 1900 was the greatest of the nation's thirty-two largest cities. These new residents filled new neighborhoods, and the city's expanding streetcar network linked all these residential areas with the downtown.

Two other late-nineteenth-century urban trends also complemented the drive for a stronger public library. One was a commitment to such urban assets as public parks, paved streets, and a municipal water system. Toledo gained its first park in 1871, renaming Lenk's Park to City Park; Walbridge Park followed in the mid-1880s. Most major streets, at least in the downtown

area, were paved by the early 1880s. After some years of debate, water flowed through municipal pipes in 1873.

A second trend came from the recovery of the panic of 1873. Toledo had lacked a strong manufacturing component even prior to the panic, depending more on commerce and regional agriculture. The panic clearly revealed this local weakness, and the businessmen of the 1880s worked with an outburst of capitalistic and entrepreneurial energy to build up the city's manufacturing base. They succeeded to a great degree during the next twenty years. It is no coincidence that Toledo's reputation as a glass capital, a bicycle producer, and a wagon builder, to cite just a few categories, can be traced to this period. These successes helped the local economy of course, but they also motivated their owners and beneficiaries to build impressive buildings. Thus, a new public library campaign proceeded during a major building boom in Toledo.

The library broached the issue of a new building in its annual report for 1884. Apparently agreeing with the library's argument, the Toledo City Council, also in 1884, transferred the title to a parcel of land to the library board for a new building, perhaps as compensation for several years of reduced library funding during the economic depression. The land was part of the abandoned right-of-way of the Miami & Erie Canal, which ran through the block bounded by Jefferson Avenue, Ontario Street, Madison Avenue, and Erie Street. (This particular site came with a certain irony. The former subscription libraries of early Toledo had helped position the town to attract the Miami & Erie Canal in the first place. Now, some forty-five years later, the canal days were over and the canal right-of-way provided a building plot for the new public library.)

Major funding for construction of the building was still needed, however, as was more land. For the next four years, library supporters kept campaigning. Their efforts succeeded in 1888 when the Ohio legislature granted permission for a bond issue to provide the needed revenue for a building and more land. The library sold bonds that paid 4 percent interest. The library trustees subsequently bought plots adjacent to the former canal right-of-way, ensuring that the new building would have enough room. The site is opposite the Pilkington headquarters building (formerly the LOF building), across Ontario Street.

#### THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY GETS ITS NEW HOME

With funding ensured, the library board selected Toledo architect Edward O. Fallis to design the new library. Though born in 1851 in Indiana, Fallis moved with his family to Toledo in 1866, and the following year he began working as an errand boy in the architectural office of Charles C. Miller. During his five-year apprenticeship there, he rose to become a draftsman. When Miller relocated to Chicago in 1872, Fallis bought Miller's local practice and opened his own firm. Around this time, he supplemented his knowledge with a trip to Europe, which included visits to Toledo, Spain, and Italy.

Fallis gained many commissions for commercial, residential, and governmental buildings, and he developed a special reputation for courthouses in the Midwest. By 1909 he was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, a distinctive honor and mark of accomplishment. Local architectural historian Ted Ligibel described Fallis this way: "Fallis produced a total of 107 known commissions in a broad range of styles and types. They were innovative and sometimes revolutionary, highly creative and eclectic, and often engaging artistic expressions."<sup>14</sup>

The new Fallis-designed library showcased one of the period's favorite styles: "early Norman, with a mingling of nearly related Byzantine." Its "general largeness and simplicity of form" also made it a good example of the Romanesque style. Its rough-hewed stone facade, complete with two tall towers flanking the main entrance on Ontario Street, gave it a definite "castle look" to most people.

The building's size and layout accommodated all of the library's 30,000 volumes on the first floor, while the second floor was kept for a later expansion of the collection and other uses. The original cost estimate for the new library was \$40,000, but the cost eventually more than doubled with the decision to make the building fireproof. The final cost of land, construction, and some new furniture was \$84,793.<sup>15</sup>

The new Toledo Public Library opened for public service on June 23, 1890.



The Locke Branch Library was made possible through the contributions of Andrew Carnegie.

### CHAPTER 3

## Urban Suburban Growth 1891-1940

THE NEXT HALF-CENTURY WOULD INCLUDE THE FINAL PHASE OF THE Industrial Age for the world and all that it meant for the Lucas County community, including its library service. Population growth, further industrialization, the impact of the internal combustion engine, and periodic financial problems would become hallmarks of the period.

#### THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY FACES THE PANIC OF 1893

The Toledo Public Library had no sooner moved into its new building when financial troubles arose in a pattern similar to that of 1873 following the library's establishment. The panic of 1893 was not as severe as the panic of 1873, and Toledo's economy, having learned from the earlier economic depression, weathered this more recent trouble in better shape. However, the immediate effects were negative for the library. The early impact of the panic caused the library's tax rate to be reduced by nearly 25 percent in 1891, and its 1892 income of \$17,789 was inadequate to operate the system. The shortfall continued as the panic continued. By 1895, the salary budget declined by nearly 20 percent to a total of \$3,263.20 for the entire staff. Librarians were reduced from full-time to part-time. As always in such a situation, book buying was severely cut for several years. From the 1,597 items added in 1892, the annual total of new books declined to 810 in 1893 and went to 374 in 1894.



The Toledo Public Library, Madison Avenue and Ontario Street, 1890—1940.

The library's income gained a small windfall in 1895, albeit at the cost of a Toledo school. That year the Central High School burned to the ground. It was located on the current site of the Main Library on Michigan Street and thus was within sight of the new library building. The school building also had served as headquarters for the school board. The school board leased the then unused second floor of the new library building for fifty dollars per month as temporary quarters. Although it was only a small percent of the library's annual budget, it was welcomed for the few years the lease was in effect.<sup>3</sup>

## THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY'S CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT IS ESTABLISHED

The library board's wisdom of overbuilding the new structure, mainly by having an entire second floor for expansion, soon became very apparent. Once this space was no longer leased to the school board, the library converted it to the Children's Department in 1899. This was the first truly dedicated space

for young readers in a Toledo library. It was on the north end of the second floor, with windows overlooking Madison Avenue. Eliza M. Kent was the department's first manager. Promotion of books and reading was an integral part of the department, for the area included bulletin boards and display

spaces. One part of Library Director Frances Jermain's vision had come true.<sup>4</sup> And, it not only came true, it succeeded. But by 1901, the librarian was questioning how long the two-year-old area could adequately handle the often overflowing crowds of children.<sup>5</sup>

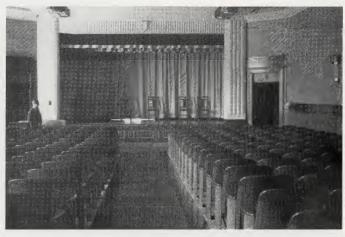
This action placed the Toledo Public Library in the forefront of library developments nationally. The creation of specially designed and designated areas in libraries for children was a strong trend between 1890 and 1900. Authorities disagree about where the very

first Children's Room was established, with some saying it was in New York City in 1885 and others saying it was in Milwaukee in 1899. Regardless, the Toledo Public Library was an early pioneer as well.<sup>6</sup>

Jermain used the Children's Department to implement another part of her vision for Toledo Public Library patrons. The Children's Department featured open shelves—young borrowers and their parents could directly browse the books on open shelves rather than having to request items from the nonpublic stack areas. While this method is taken for granted now, the concept was very new and innovative in the late nineteenth century. Imagine the pleasure children, older youths, and adults had looking through the actual books and making their selections.

A local newspaper reported on these developments in a very favorable light: "Doubtless a good deal of time will be spent by the children in simply looking over 'their books.' With such an arrangement they cannot help but gain a pride in the library and also gain an incentive to hopeful and wholesome reading, for as nothing but the best books are in the library, no one can exaggerate the benefit that will be reached by such books being put in the hands of the children."

Open shelves worked so well in the Children's Department that Jermain extended that concept to the adult collections in 1900. The entire library closed for sixteen days that fall so that the collection could be fully readied and arranged within the building. The open shelves were the instant success expected. Just four months later, library circulation was estimated to be up



The auditorium of the old Main Library at Madison and Ontario in downtown Toledo.



Patrons discuss new materials at the old Main Library.

several thousand volumes monthly due to patrons being able to browse and select their own items. For all of 1900, circulation totaled 222,231 books, an increase of 25 percent! The public loved the new system, and Toledo's world-renowned Progressive mayor, Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones, even praised the new library's open shelves in his annual report for 1900.8

In 1899, the Toledo Public Library hosted the state convention of the Ohio Library Association, which had formed in 1895. Unquestionably, the new central library in downtown Toledo, including its new Children's Department with open shelves, was a major attraction to the visiting librarians.

A new format joined the printed word in the library during 1911. That year 184 music rolls for player pianos were added for circulation. The following year, in a spirit of enlightened self-interest, the Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Indiana, contributed more than a thousand rolls to join the earlier ones. The inventory of rolls continued to grow and by 1913, they circulated a total of 11,565 times, or a little less than 5 percent of total library circulation. Apparently, the rolls were removed from circulation following World War I.9



SEWALL SUCCEEDS JERMAIN AS LIBRARIAN

A librarian helps a patron at the old Main Library.

A major watershed in the Toledo Public Library's history came in September 1903 when Frances Jermain resigned as director, completing twenty years as director and more than twenty-three years with the Toledo Public Library and its predecessor, the Toledo Library Association. She would die in 1905, but she would leave an unrivaled legacy for library supporters in her many achievements on behalf of public library service in Toledo.

Willis Fuller Sewall succeeded Jermain. His background of library work included the Bryn Mawr College Library and, most recently, working as a cataloger at the Grolier Club Library, a New York City-based institution composed primarily of book collectors. One of the first changes under the Sewall administration was a liberalization of borrowing policies. Prior to September 1903, patrons could check out only one book at a time; thereafter, patrons could borrow two books. In January 1907, the limit was raised to four books, and the pre-existing rule that only one of the books could be fiction was dropped. In the library's annual report for 1907, Sewall asserted that these changes gained more public usage. The chance to check out more books was especially attractive to persons who had to commute from greater distances, making the trip now more rewarding, he argued.<sup>10</sup>

A second improvement no doubt stemmed in part from Sewall's background as a cataloger. In its current condition, the Toledo Public Library catalog was an obstacle to finding desired books, not an aid. In fact, there were

The Toledo
Public Library

A View
Among the Stacks

In the Children's
Department

A photo collage from a local newspaper.

two catalogs. The second edition of the library's printed catalog, in a book-like format, was the choice for locating older titles, while a card catalog supposedly contained more recent additions to the collection. Sewall began by taking personal charge of merging these two sources into one unified, clearly organized card catalog. To speed this conversion, the library purchased already printed catalog cards from both the Library of Congress and the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh. After the first year's efforts, Sewall hired the library's first professional cataloger to oversee the remaining task and then to keep it up-to-date. The new card catalog also was relocated from a side room to a more convenient site in the public area.

The head librarian was not just interested in checking out books, he wanted to get them back. Troubled that some materials were not being returned, Sewall secured the official cooperation of the Toledo Police Department in 1908. A motorcycle officer pursued twenty-one separate cases and brought back the overdue books! This practice continued until 1922, when the police became too busy and a "library messenger" was assigned, with success.<sup>12</sup>

Sewall faced interrelated problems stemming from growing public usage and a growing collection to which the public needed convenient access. One part of the solution was clear, at least to library supporters: expand the size of the 1890-vintage library building. By 1905, the book collection of 65,492 items exceeded the building's designed book capacity. The overcrowding grew even worse as more than 80,000 volumes were squeezed in by 1914. Sewall made adjustments within the building to partially cope. Book processing was relocated to the basement to free up space for public use, for example. He summed up the library's condition in his 1909 annual report: "The Library is potbound." 15

The community and its leaders agreed in 1913 and the city council approved a \$25,000 bond issue to fund an addition to the library. Since 1910, the library had amassed a \$17,000 fund to help pay for an addition's furnishings. Construction of the so-called "annex" began in September 1914 and opened for public service in October 1915. The addition was to the south end



er of Shoveling snow at the old Main Library, 1934.

of the building, extending the library to the fire station at the corner of Jefferson and Ontario Streets.

The opening of the annex enabled the library to generally reorganize the internal layout of the enlarged building. The public reference room gained new quarters in the annex, as did the library board's office, the librarian's office, and the order department. The patrons' reading room remained in the older section but was expanded in space for fifty more people. The second-floor Children's Room gained new, child-sized furniture and bookcases. The children's storytime room received low benches. The circulating department also gained more space to better cope with growing activity.

This successful building program was almost countered when the city budget commission provided only \$5,804 for the library's 1915 operations, even though the library had received \$30,000 for 1914. Ostensibly, this was due to not having a library spokesperson at the commission's meeting, since Sewall had resigned and left town and his successor had not yet been selected. Ultimately, the city council authorized a \$30,000 bond issue for furnishings and other needed equipment.<sup>14</sup>



Circulation desk of the old Main Library.

#### HIRSHBERG SUCCEEDS SEWALL AS DIRECTOR

An expanding city welcomed Herbert S. Hirshberg as the librarian to succeed Willis Sewall in December 1914. Prior to coming to the Toledo Public Library, Hirshberg had served as a reference librarian at the Cleveland Public Library and taught at the Western Reserve University School of Library Science. He would depart Toledo in 1922 to become state librarian of Ohio, then librarian of the Akron Public Library, and finally dean of the School of Library Science and Director of Libraries at Western Reserve University. The creation of a branch library system in Toledo would be his legacy to local library patrons.

### IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I AFFECTS THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY

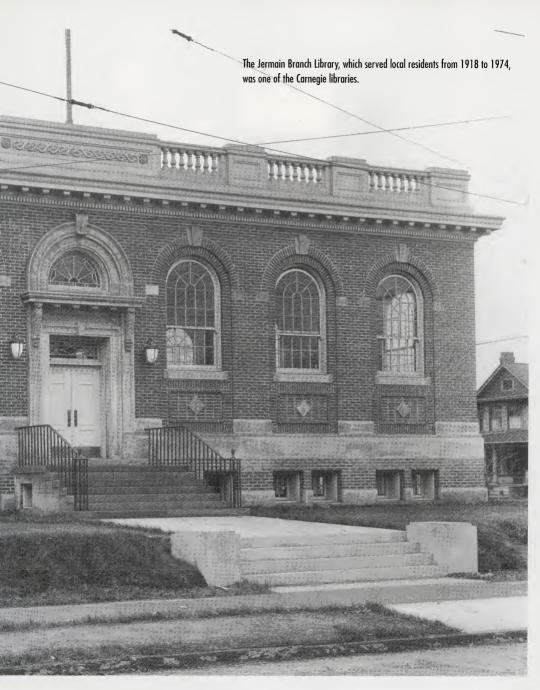
Just as earlier domestic economic panics had affected library service in Toledo, the Great War intruded as well. The library purchased the "best books on the war" so that adults and children could learn more about the struggle. Library displays featured books on growing and preserving food to complement the government's urgings for people to grow more of their own food. The extreme anti-everything-German attitude that was quite common in the United States during the war did not seem to overwhelm the public library. Books written in German remained on the shelves. Some items judged to be obvious pro-German propaganda or otherwise "adversely affecting the morale of citizens" were, however, removed. 16

Of a more positive nature, the library helped raise more than \$5,500 locally to support the American Library Association's drive to provide books to U.S. service men. A later drive, in conjunction with the Boy Scouts, actually collected 20,000 books for shipment to the troops.

Whether it's microfilm, videos, or the Internet, the Toledo—Lucas County Public Library has always been on the cutting edge of technology. A librarian demonstrates a new microfilm machine at the old Main Library, circa 1938.











Periodicals at the old Main Library, circa 1930.



The old Kent Branch Library, one of the Carnegie libraries, circa 1928.

Hirshberg took a leave of absence for four months in 1918 to serve as librarian at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station near Chicago. He also supervised the American Library Association's services to troops in Toledo and at nearby Camp Perry during the war.

As the war was nearly over, a great influenza epidemic swept the world, reaching the United States in the fall of 1918. Following the practice of many other public sites, the Toledo Public Library closed its doors for twenty days in October and November to limit the spread of the disease. It was closed to minors under eighteen years of age for another seventeen days in December.

#### BRANCH LIBRARIES ARE ESTABLISHED IN TOLEDO

One consequence of Toledo's growing population was the geographic spread of the city as new suburban housing plats developed. And while extended streetcar lines connected these new neighborhoods to the central business district, some trial "deposit collections" of books at neighborhood sites proved the need for a library presence beyond the central library in the

downtown area. These deposit collections were popular, but the library believed that a fully staffed branch, complete with strong reference resources and a large circulating collection, was the real goal. In 1909, former librarian Sewall clearly stated the library's position: the library could "... never fulfill its mission of carrying good reading to the people without branches." <sup>17</sup>



The first full-service branch library opened in April 1915 in the Glenwood School in Toledo's West End. It was in service for three years, closing in 1917 when the Kent Branch Library opened nearby.

Famous library philanthropist Andrew Carnegie offered the City of Toledo \$100,000 in December of 1905 for the construction of three or four branch libraries. Following his usual practice, the offer came with the proviso that the city would provide the building sites and supply the operating funds. Negotiations among Carnegie, the city, and the library continued at an irregular pace until 1916 when a final deal was struck: Carnegie would provide \$125,000; the city council approved \$40,000 for furnishings, equipment, and books; and the library would staff and operate the new facilities. Each of the branches featured a large reading and reference space on the first floor and a public meeting room and work areas in the basement. The architectural style differed among the branches, as did the individual floor plans. Work at the five sites began that fall and they opened in 1917 and 1918.

The East Toledo Branch opened December 5, 1917, and was named to honor David Ross Locke, a famous editor of *The Blade*, the creator of the satiric character Petroleum V. Nasby, and a strong local library advocate and trustee.

The West End Branch opened December 11, 1917, and was named after Eliza M. Kent, an assistant librarian at the Toledo Public Library for many years and the first manager of the Children's Department, who had left the bulk of her estate to the library.



Above: The original Toledo Heights Branch Library.

Left: Dedicating the new Toledo Heights Branch Library, June 30, 1935.



A librarian reads a magazine at the old Main Library.

The Southwest Branch opened January 3, 1918, and was named for Anna C. Mott, an earlier Toledo citizen who was active in civic improvement and who had left a portion of her estate to the library.

The North Toledo Branch opened January 7, 1918, and was named after Frances D. Jermain, the longtime director of the Toledo Public Library who had retired in 1903 and died in 1905.

The South Toledo Branch opened January 16, 1918, and operated under its geographic-designated name.

Not surprisingly, the branch libraries were an immediate hit in their respective neighborhoods, as many library resources were now only minutes from hundreds of homes. One anecdote expresses the joy of many young residents who now had a library right in their own neighborhoods. A ten-year-old youngster named Franklin Hayward lived on Islington, close to the new Kent Branch Library. A half-century later, he recounted how in the summers he would select books at the Kent Branch, then board an open-air streetcar and ride around the city all afternoon while reading, all for a penny. "These branches are one of the greatest things which have happened to Toledo.



Having those books so near my home definitely implanted a love for reading which has lasted all my life." Hayward clearly caught the library habit, for besides becoming a lifelong reader, he served several terms as a trustee of the Toledo Public Library.<sup>18</sup>

Almost immediately, the branch libraries circulated more total items annually than the Main Library's total. In 1919, the first full year that all of the branches were in operation, 60 percent of the library's (increased) total circulation was done at the five branches. Throughout their existence, the library system's branches have been "the library" to thousands of library patrons of all ages, and evolving technologies have only strengthened the branches' capabilities to meet the needs of their patrons.

Students search the card catalog at the old Main Library.

#### LUCAS COUNTY LIBRARY IS ESTABLISHED

public libraries benefited Lucas County beyond the branches for Toledo. By 1916, residents of the county living outside Toledo convinced the county commissioners that they also deserved more formal library services. Acting under an Ohio law passed in 1898 that permitted counties to establish public

Andrew Carnegie's personal philanthropy in funding the construction of

libraries, the commissioners created the Lucas County Library. Fortuitously, and probably not without coincidence, they also successfully applied for a \$10,000 grant from Carnegie's foundation for the construction of a library building for the new library system. Organized by Emilie Meuser, the first director, and Jessie Welles and opening in January 1918, the headquarters of the new Lucas County Library was at 501 River Road in Maumee, the largest county community outside Toledo. The 1,800-square foot building, in a colonial style, was most attractive on a two-and-a-quarter-acre parcel, the site of an American military defeat in the War of 1812 and subsequently the location of an early Lucas County courthouse.19 It opened with a collection of 1,610 books, and 643 borrowers signed up that first year.20

One part of the Lucas County Library's original stated goal was "to touch every area of the county as soon as possible and as effectively as possible."21 Thus, the new library soon set up

collections of about one-hundred books in four other sites about the county: Fred Starkweather's drug store in Waterville, the Vincent Adams Pharmacy in Sylvania, the F. J. Hollicker Store in Whitehouse, and the post office in Monclova. By the end of its first year, collections of about twenty books had been placed in twenty-eight outlying schools. By 1924, every school in the Lucas County Library district had service from the county library.<sup>22</sup>

#### MORE BRANCH LIBRARIES ARE ESTABLISHED IN TOLEDO

The first five Toledo branch libraries produced a desire for more branches. During the 1920s, the library added branches via two methods. One method established libraries in newly built neighborhood schools, which were open to both students and area adults. These branches could not provide full service and were an interim measure. Among the schools used in the

Locke Branch Library, from the Toledo Times, December 1938.





Reference Room at the old Main Library.

1920s were Navarre, Nathan Hale, Oakdale-White, Hamilton, McKinley, Arlington, and Harvard.

The second method relied on free-standing branch libraries, either in leased quarters or owned by the library. The Birmingham Branch opened in 1920 in the East Side Community House. By 1925, the Birmingham neighborhood had its own branch building at its present site, Paine and Genesee Streets. The West Toledo Branch followed a similar course, opening in leased quarters in 1923 and subsequently occupying its own building on Willys Parkway by the end of the decade. As the decade ended, the Toledo Heights Branch also opened in rented quarters at 1728 Wayne Street.

The expansion of the branch network and the strong public use of these neighborhood locations justified a separate Branch Department, established in 1928. The branches' combined collection of 147,741 books produced a total circulation of 1,186,959 in 1929. The campaign to establish the library in as many parts of Toledo as possible clearly proved to be a winner for both the patrons and the library.

### HIRSCHBERG DEPARTS AND VITZ IS NAMED LIBRARIAN

The library trustees named Carl Vitz to succeed Hirschberg as librarian when Hirschberg left to become state librarian in 1922. Vitz had gained a good professional reputation while serving as vice librarian at the Cleveland Public Library, a much larger organization. The library trustees believed his experience well prepared him to continue the momentum of growth established under Jermain and Hirschberg.

The Webster School Library Station, March of 1928



### A TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT IS CREATED AT THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY

While the library expanded into neighborhoods, a new department at the Main Library showed the library's commitment to local industry and the non-fiction facet of operations. In 1926, a Technology Department was established, occupying the space of the former reading room in the original portion of the 1890 Main Library. The department focused on the "natural and practical sciences"—manufacturing and business. Many local businesses, manufacturing firms, and University of Toledo faculty members were among those cited as becoming frequent users of the new department. In support of the library's concern with such topics, local glass-producing companies funded a special collection of books and periodicals on glass and its production, which was housed in the Technology Department.<sup>23</sup>

### THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY EXTENDS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Frances Jermain's creation of a Children's Department in 1899 and the opening of its shelves for direct browsing were two major advances in serving the young readers of the community.

Willis Sewall also improved children's services as he followed Jermain as head librarian in 1903. In 1905, he began what would become one of the longest-lived library traditions—storytimes for children. Initially done as an experiment, they soon proved their popularity with both children and their parents.

The next major advancement followed the opening of five branch libraries. With a Children's Department at the Main Library and now children's areas in the branches, the library believed that services to children needed to be more organized and even more aggressive. Ethel C. Wright was hired in 1918 as director of Children's Services to oversee this active campaign.

One component was staff training. The current library staff members who worked with children attended a seven-month, two-mornings-per-week class under the direction of the library's director of Children's Work. To broaden the horizon of the class, guest presenters were invited, including the director of the Toledo Museum of Art, the assistant superintendent of the Toledo Public Schools, and a psychologist from the University of Toledo. Six such classes were conducted between 1919 and 1930, giving training to sixty-five female staff members.<sup>24</sup>

As another part of this effort, a Schools Division began in 1919, separate from the Children's Room, and librarians officially began visiting Toledo schools.<sup>25</sup> Thus began a routine that has continued into the twenty-first century. Librarians told stories to the children, reviewed books for older children,

and left forms so that youngsters could sign up for library cards. Within four years, the school visitation activity was fully underway, with librarians going to forty-three of the forty-five public schools in Toledo for a total of 721 individual classrooms visited in 1922. Twenty of Toledo's twenty-seven parochial schools were also included. In addition, 112 classes came to library locations that year.

Complementing these visits, the library established 157 book collections in fifty-one public and parochial schools throughout Toledo in the same period.  $^{26}$ 

In 1936, juvenile borrowers were divided between children and "young

people." Any minor who was in the second semester of the eighth grade was entitled to have "YP" stamped on his or her library card and thus could borrow books from the young people's section of the adult sections in library locations.<sup>27</sup>

With its strong services to children, directly and via the schools, it was no surprise when the Toledo Public Library was reorganized from a municipal library into a school district library in 1923. The primary advan-

tage was a small increase in funding, since the Toledo School District actually extended slightly beyond the Toledo city limits. To patrons, however, there was no perceptible change in service or resources.

While the Main Library had been expanded and branch libraries had been added, the library also liberalized its policies for borrowing. In 1922, borrowers no longer had to provide the names of property owners who were "guarantors" that the borrower would return all books he or she checked out. However, two references were still asked for, ostensibly so borrowers might be located if a patron's address became outdated. A sign of telephone technology becoming more common, business and residential phone numbers were asked for at the time of library card registration.<sup>28</sup>



In 1927, the Sylvania Public Library was established as a school district library and became independent of the Lucas County Library, which had served the area since its own founding ten years earlier.<sup>29</sup> Presumably, a desire for greater local control and a closer relationship with the Sylvania schools motivated the action.

The first location of the Sylvania Public Library was on the former homestead of Henry Burnham at 6769 Maplewood Avenue. Burham had willed his



Main floor shelving at the old Main Library, circa 1938.

home to the Sylvania School District and the school district leased the building to the library. In 1930, two "library centers" of 300 books each were in the Hillview and Central Avenue schools to extend service further to the township's 6,392 residents. The total circulation for 1930 was 28,380

items charged to 2,755 registered borrowers.<sup>30</sup>

The new library system proved popular, but strong usage did not shield it from the economic pressures of the 1930s depression. During those hard years, library income fell 25 percent in the early thirties, and by 1939, it declined another 9 percent. Library staff members received no compensation for several months. Basic reference and circulation services persisted, however, and Sylvania Public Library even helped host a Tri-State Library Convention in Toledo during October 1936.

Despite these problems, Sylvania

Public Library ranked well in the statistics of Ohio libraries in 1939. The number of persons served put it in twenty-second place within the population category. However, the library ranked second in juvenile circulation, third in registered borrowers, fourth in circulation, eighth in number of hours open per week, and twelfth in number of volumes in the collection.<sup>31</sup>

## DOROTHY STROUSE IS NAMED DIRECTOR OF THE LUCAS COUNTY LIBRARY

Dorothy Strouse, a native of Worthington, Indiana, came to the Lucas County Library in 1927 as its cataloger. She had worked in libraries as a teenager and as an undergraduate and came to the Lucas County Library from the School of Library Science at Western Reserve University. Her total commitment to public library service, teamed with high energy and much competence, helps explain her promotion to director of the Lucas County Library just two years later, when the previous director departed. Incredibly, for the next forty years the Lucas County Library and its patrons would be the beneficiaries of Strouse's drive and vision. As Toledo–Lucas County Public Library Director Ardath Danford wrote in a biographical article about Dorothy Strouse, "With absolute commitment and seemingly limitless energy, she led a fledgling library system to become one of the most prominent libraries in Ohio."<sup>32</sup>



Above and facing page: Scenes in the basement of the old Main Library, circa 1935.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and then World War II posed major challenges to the first two decades of the Strouse administration. The nation's economic crisis meant declining tax revenues and higher local government spending on relief and welfare.

However, before the depression hit bottom, the Lucas County Library was able to finance a \$23,000 addition to the original Carnegie building on River Road. Opening in 1931, the addition's main facade faced south with a pillared portico and cupolo in the center, enhancing the colonial design of the earlier building, and doubling the size of the overall building. The Toledo News Bee newspaper noted in its story about the opening that the addition "was built without the necessity of a bond issue or without increasing tax rates by effecting various economies in management and a temporary slackening of book pur-



chases." The paper noted that the library's 23 percent increase in circulation over 1930 was a clear sign of the Lucas County Library's popularity in the community. In 1930, Lucas County Library patrons checked out 211,388 items.<sup>33</sup>

### THE LUCAS COUNTY LIBRARY BEGINS A BOOKMOBILE SERVICE

In 1937, the Lucas County Library expanded into an area of library operations in which it would make its mark—bookmobiles. During the Lucas County Library board's annual meeting in February of 1937, the trustees approved the purchase of the library's first bookmobile, a term new to the local-library service vocabulary. The new service and vehicle came through a federal grant and an increase in the county commissioners' appropriation for the Lucas County Library. The planned vehicle was predicted to carry between 2,000 and 3,000 volumes and would be large enough so that patrons could come onboard to make their own selections. A librarian would be with the vehicle to help patrons. Through a schedule of five-days-per-week, the bookmobile upgraded library service to some 23,000 county residents who previously only had very small collections in nearby schools.<sup>34</sup>



The Toledo Heights Branch Library, one of the Carnegie libraries, June 1937.

By the spring of 1938, Strouse reported to her board that the monthly Lucas County Library circulation was breaking past records, and she attributed it mainly to the popularity of the bookmobile. In just seven months of service, 2,963 patrons checked out 53,463 items from the vehicle's collection. Patrons could also request materials not usually carried on the bookmobile and the items would be delivered when the truck next visited the locale.<sup>35</sup>

### THE GREAT DEPRESSION HITS THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The stock market crash in October of 1929 began a period of nearly ten years of economic distress across the nation. The Depression's impact was particularly severe in Toledo. As in the panics of 1873 and 1893, the public library became one of the institutional victims as incomes fell, public hours were cut, and fewer books were purchased.

Ironically, the Depression saw a substantial increase in circulation; the branch system grew and a new Main Library building would become a legacy of the Great Depression. (Sensing that people wanted to do more reading, patrons were able to check out up to ten books beginning in 1933, an increase from the former limit of four items.)<sup>36</sup>

Declining revenue soon hit the library. It suffered a 20 percent cut in 1931 and an 11 percent cut the following year. A further cutback came in 1934.

The early declines forced a salary reduction in 1932 for all staff members making \$900 or more annually, and staff vacancies were not filled. These reduced levels continued through 1936, when salaries were partially restored but not to the 1932 levels.

In 1931, Ohio began collecting the so-called "local situs intangibles tax," a tax on "classified personal property," i.e., income from stocks, bonds, and bank deposits. By 1935, "nearly all" of the Ohio public libraries were dependent on this local situs intangibles tax for most of their income. Unfortunately, according to a survey by the State Library of Ohio, 200 of the 218 public libraries in Ohio were not adequately funded by this intangibles tax. The first of several annual State-Aid-to-Libraries bills became law in 1935 and provided some financial assistance. However, the local situs intangibles tax would prove to be a weak financial foundation for the vast majority of Ohio public libraries until a new funding source, the Library and Local Government Support Fund, based on the state income tax, replaced it in 1986.<sup>37</sup>

Reduced funding and less staff led to shorter hours of public service. Branches closed an additional day per week; on days when they were open, the Studying in the old Main Library, circa 1936.





By 1937, the old Main Library was a popular, crowded place for patrons and books.

Main Library and the branches all closed earlier, especially on the weekends. Reference service at the Main Library on Sundays was dropped as well.

The hard times also forced the discontinuation of three library activities. The first activity to be discontinued, in 1931, was training classes, which had produced so many well-prepared employees for the library since 1914; the classes would not be resumed. The second activity also was terminated in 1931 when the librarian maintaining book collections in the local hospitals resigned.<sup>38</sup> Lastly, the branch libraries located in the Toledo Public Schools all closed down.

Seemingly a good concept, these facilities had never proven as popular as expected. The consensus of opinion was that most adults did not feel inclined to visit the library collections housed in school buildings. By the 1930s, the schools, also hit with income shortages, had suspended summer maintenance of their buildings, including the four housing library collections. The library board thus voted to close the four installations in 1940.<sup>39</sup>

Another unfortunate sign of the times was the sense that a growing number of books were being taken from the library, especially at the Main Library,

without being charged out. Door persons began checking for properly charged books in 1934 and discovered more than 800 items illegally heading out the door. The totals for the next two years declined slightly

as word got around, but the totals were still in the 600 to 700 range.

There were positive aspects in the midst of cutbacks and shortages, however. Circulation rose over the annual totals in the 1920s. Within this general increase, some topical areas gained even more popularity, such as fiction (especially mysteries and westerns), as people sought distraction from their daily struggles. Likewise, books on economics and how to change occupations, especially entering sales, proved very popular as other patrons sought to cope with reality. In 1933, the per capita circulation (total circulation divided by Toledo's total population) was 7.9 items, a usage level higher than the national average. The Main Library's Newspaper Room was another busy place, as readers followed current events and checked out-of-town papers for better opportunities elsewhere, according to library reports of the period.40

As noted earlier, branch service expanded via new facilities, even if some hours had to be cut. The failure of one local bank made its building at the intersection of Central Avenue and Lagrange Street available and the library board purchased it and several adjoining stores for \$23,500 in 1934. The newly named Lagrange—Central Branch Library opened August 31, 1934, and featured a collection that included items for the neighborhood's many ethnic Polish families.<sup>41</sup>

The local offices of the Public Works Administration, one of the federal agencies pumping money into communities via construction projects, helped the library with two branches in the 1930s. A new library building on the edge of Highland Park in south Toledo became the home for the Toledo Heights Branch, replacing rented quarters. Locke Branch Library in east Toledo was substantially enlarged also.

#### TRAINING CLASSES

A commendable sign of the library's determination to strengthen its internal ability to service local patrons appeared in 1915. Following a practice of many other major public libraries in the period, the Toledo Public Library organized its own "training class" for prospective librarians. Librarian Herbert Hirschberg, who succeeded Willis Sewall in December 1914, taught the first class of five students himself. He was a fitting instructor, having taught future librarians at the Western Reserve University School of Library Science while also a reference librarian at the Cleveland Public Library. A second class of seventeen individuals was organized in January 1917, and Jessie Welles, a former manager of the Circulation Department at the Carnegie University Library in Pittsburgh, was hired as an instructor. Students paid a \$35 tuition charge, attended class for fifteen hours per week, and worked part-time in the library as well. A third class began in 1918.

These library-sponsored classes were strongly complemented when the Toledo Board of Education began similar training classes in 1919. Instructors were a mix of school-paid staff and Toledo Public Library staff members, and by 1922, the library had effectively merged the classes into the library's own process. Enrollment was quite selective, drawing from both high school and college graduates. The classes were extensive, dealing with cataloging, children's literature, current events, reference, and many other topics. Students received 300 hours of instruction and then spent another 320 hours practicing and working in the library. Another facet of the program was a thirty-two-book reading course that the students had to complete.48

These classes were an important source of trained personnel for the library, especially given the expansion of the central library and the creation of the entire branch system. For example, of the seventy-six training class graduates in 1923, fifty-one became libraristand twenty-five were already branch librarians, division heads, children's librarians, and first assistants.<sup>49</sup> The greatest problem was that the library could not always offer competitive wages, so graduates went elsewhere.

The series of classes, finally numbering fifteen, continued until 1931. They ended as a casualty of the Depression after training 162 students, of whom 157 had worked for the Toledo Public Library in some way following their graduation, with seventy-nine still working in 1931. Some members did not retire until the 1970s and 1980s.

Two other branches grew during the decade without the Public Works Administration's help. Kent Branch, one of the five original "Carnegie branches," doubled in size with an addition to its front. With the annexation of Point Place into the City of Toledo, the library organized a Point Place Branch in 1938, operating as part of a community center in the former junior high school building.

In 1936, Vitz left to become librarian of the Minneapolis Public Library. Assistant Librarian Russell Schunk succeeded to the leadership position. Schunk had a law degree and extensive experience with law libraries and legal publishing; he transferred into academic libraries when he became head of the Western Reserve University libraries. He moved from that Cleveland institution to the Toledo Public Library when he became manager of the library's newly established Technology Department. In a newspaper interview shortly after he became librarian, Schunk characterized the mission of a good public library by quoting the motto of the American Library Association: "The best reading for the largest number at the least cost."

A second administrative change was a clear sign that the Toledo Public Library was becoming a more complex organization. In 1938, a new position was established—assistant librarian, with special responsibility for the new Main Library. Previously, all library departments had reported directly to the head librarian, but the multiplication of departments at the Main Library and the general enlargement of the library system argued powerfully for the new position. Walter Brahm, who headed the Technology Department, was named to the new post.

#### TOLEDO GAINS A NEW MAIN LIBRARY BUILDING

Within thirty years of its opening, the 1890 building began to become crowded. The addition of the annex in 1915 and the reorganization of the existing space bought some further time. By 1936, however, a strong case would be made for a new central library building. The shelving was proving insufficient. Books had to be arranged along the tops of shelf units as a temporary measure, although none were very convenient for access. Many books were stored in even more inconvenient and inappropriate places, e.g., stacked on the floor or on window ledges.

Preliminary planning had begun under Vitz, but Schunk had to make major adjustments to the earlier plans when the site for the new building changed and the federal Public Works Administration became a major partner in the project. Originally, a new central library was to arise on the same site as the existing Main Library, with the library occupying temporary quarters during the razing and construction period. This changed when the Board of Education offered to sell the entire block of Michigan Street, Madison Avenue, Tenth Street, and Adams Street to the library. This parcel had been home to two Toledo high schools and had been the original Woodward Vocational School since the school board purchased the land from Jesup W.



Scott in 1852. The library board accepted the offer and paid \$500,000 for the land, which provided a much larger building site and included space for later expansion.

Library trustees and staff members traveled to several cities and visited their respective central libraries to gain ideas for Toledo's new facility. The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore became the principal model for Toledo. Although its decoration was different, the floor layout and departmental organization closely guided the Toledo project. The local firm of Hahn & Hayes won the architectural contract and the responsibility of supervising the construction. The exterior design strongly resembled the facade of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.<sup>43</sup>

The new Main Library was reflective of several trends and compromises in library design and operation for that period. For example, patrons could browse extensively, but basement stacks were also provided so that the building could function as a central library with duplicate copies and additional items in reserve, which were available for retrieval from the stacks.

The old Kent Branch Library.



Toledo Central High School, circa 1870, occupied the site of today's Main Library.

The "department store of information" concept also was a design feature. More subject specialization was the concept then in favor to make the large metropolitan libraries easier for patrons to use. Thus, the three Adult and one Children's Departments of the old central library were reorganized into nine Adult and two Children's Departments upon the move into the new Main Library.<sup>44</sup>

One of the new departments was Local History and Genealogy, which pulled together previously collected artifacts related to the history of Toledo, Lucas County, and northwest Ohio. It also launched a more aggressive effort to further document and preserve the county's heritage for future generations.

Future expansion was another theme that received much attention. The building was to have a capacity of 1.5 million volumes and accommodate 612 visitors, thus preventing it from becoming cramped for some time. The building itself was located toward the southern end of the building site, leaving room at the northern end of the block for future major expansion. Costs, including the site, would total just over \$2 million, with \$800,000 coming from the federal government.

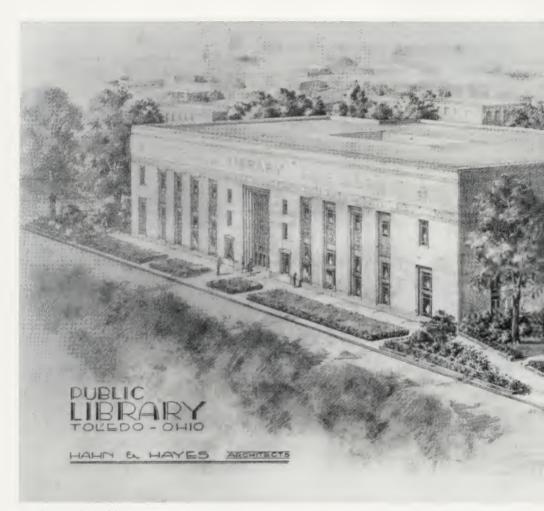


Conveniently, 1938 was the one-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Young Men's Association Library, and the groundbreaking for the new Main Library on December 16 was included in a week-long celebration of the beginnings of libraries in Lucas County.

The 1890 central library building closed to the public on August 24, 1940. The logistics of the move were complex but thoroughly organized. Schunk described them in some detail to the professional library world in the October 1941 issue of *Library Journal*, the leading national trade journal of the profession.<sup>45</sup>

A preparatory step for actually moving the collection was to completely fumigate the closed building, so as to not contaminate the new Main Library when the books were moved. The Willis Day Storage Company had the contract to transfer the 347,000 volumes, which it did in seventy-two hours—slightly more than half of the allotted time. Order among the books was preserved via specially designed and labeled moving cartons, with shelves numbered in both buildings. The new Main Library opened for business following a dedication on September 4, 1940.

Placing the cornerstone of the Historic Main Library in 1939. Note the time capsule about to be entombed. It remains there today.



An architect's rendering of the Historic Main Library, February 1939. The garden and fountain were never constructed to the right of the building. In his *Library Journal* article, Schunk concluded that the move went extremely well and as planned. It went better, in fact, than if any of the unsolicited suggestions from outsiders had been adopted. "One suggestion was for all library patrons to check out all the library's books from the old Main Library and then return them to the new Main Library. Imagine the nightmare at the returns desk when all these books came back," he wrote. Another idea was to have "groups of business men, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, policemen, firemen, and the like" form bucket brigades from the old building to the new and pass the books along. While that would have been quite a sight in the downtown area, Schunk feared for its impact on traffic in the area while the lines of volunteers snaked across streets.<sup>46</sup>



Upon the occasion of the 1940 Main Library opening, Schunk described the purpose of the new building: "To give good books the care they deserve and to make these books readily available to the public, to extend the use of books in scientific pursuits, literature, and to contribute to the general broadening of knowledge. . . . To this end every effort has been made." That is a well-phrased and accurate sentiment of the community's desire for the new Main Library. It would probably be just as accurate for the expansion and renovation of the Main Library in 2001, with expanding "books" to mean the whole range of library resources.



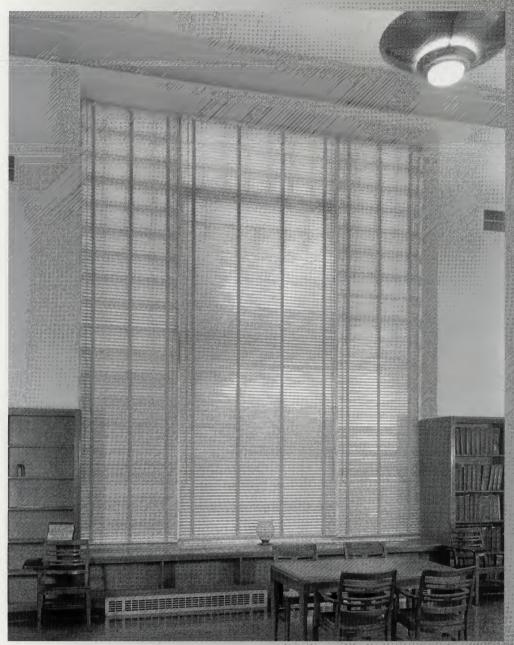
The children's storytime room in the Historic Main Library includes Vitrolite murals still visible today, circa 1941.

Right: Original light fixtures in the Historic Main Library have been restored and placed throughout the renovated building.





The reference room at the old Main Library.



The giant windows on the street level of Main Library remain a distinctive part of the building's art deco design.

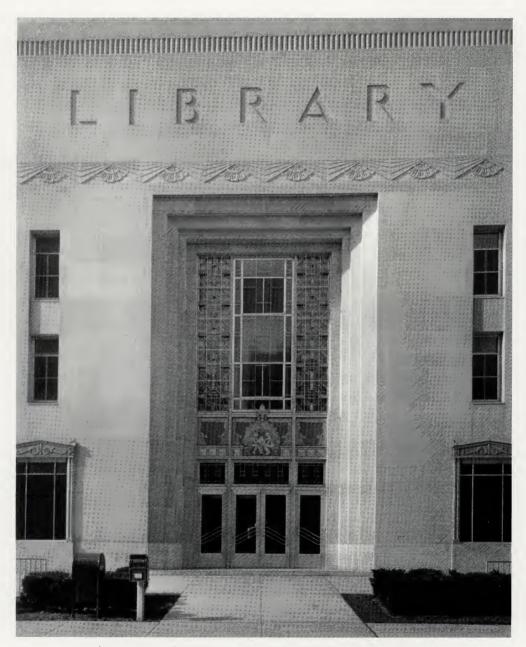
### CHAPTER 4

# New Resources New Library System 1941-1969

THE PERIOD FROM WHEN THE TOLEDO PUBLIC LIBRARY MOVED into its new Main Library in 1940 to the merger of the three library systems in Lucas County in 1970 included a significant expansion of services to Lucas County residents. The depth and variety of available resources increased significantly, as did the growth in the number of library locations. It was also the heyday of the Lucas County Library's bookmobile service. During the same period, the long-range future development of public library service was put on a new course with the merger of the three systems in the county. Lastly, the inability of the state intangibles tax to provide adequate library funding, with little potential for growth, grew as a factor in library operations.

#### WORLD WAR II IMPACTS THE LIBRARIES

The three libraries in Lucas County were an integral part of the home front during the worldwide struggle, and their usage pattern changed from that during peacetime. One notable change was a general decline in Toledo circulation. Full employment and much overtime came as local businesses geared up for war-related production. Consequently, individuals had less time for reading and using library resources. Other wartime factors also had a negative impact, for example, the rationing of tires and gasoline forced people to postpone travel planning and curtail driving in general.



The main entrance to the Main Library remains on Michigan Street between Madison and Adams.

The wartime reading habits of Lucas County residents were understandable. Their greatest interest was in topics directly related to being civilians at war and subject to rationing: gardening, health, poultry raising, canning foods, and nutrition. The popularity of books on home repair and conserving automobile tires reflected the rationing of tires and the scarcity of building materials. However, as the tide of victory began to swing in favor of the allies, fewer people were interested in civil defense and air raid protection.\(^1\)

The armed services and the lure of so many war-related and higher paying jobs produced a shortage of maintenance men and pages at the libraries,

especially at the Toledo Public Library. To keep current staff and attract new members, the library's salaries rose during the war. At last, cuts made in the 1930s during the Depression were fully restored and then exceeded. As examples, the head librarian made \$5,100 in 1941, while staff members serving as librarians had a range from \$1,140 to \$2,700 annually. But, these increases still did not prevent loss of staff. In 1943 alone, eleven professionals and sixteen clerical workers left for other jobs. That number was large enough to necessitate a shortening of public service hours and a reassignment of duties. The major change in hours was the closing of the Main Library at 1 P.M.<sup>2</sup> This condition continued in 1944 and 1945, even with another salary

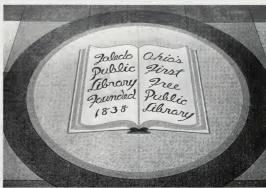
increase in the latter year. At the end of the war in 1945, library staff totaled 152 (including 79.5 professionals), down nearly 20 percent from 1940.<sup>3</sup>

As in World War I, the Toledo Public Library removed certain books from its shelves. This time the request came from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The removed items covered secret inks, secret codes, and explosives, and mainly were books found in the Technology Department.

The library also cooperated in getting books to men and women in uniform. As part of a Victory Book Campaign in 1942, local citizens donated some 200,000 books at library collection points, of which 94,400 were judged to be worthy for forwarding to the troops.<sup>4</sup>

In the midst of the world war, local pride in the new Main Library surely was boosted when *National Geographic* included a photograph of the new Children's Room in its January 1943 issue.

Further national exposure came from within the library profession that year when the *Library Journal* published an article by Toledo Public Library Librarian Ethel Wright about her experimental use of comic books to build the library and literature habits in children. In the Main Library's Children's Room, a rack held sixty comic books and copies of popular library books. The purpose of the experiment was to determine why and to what extent children preferred comics over library books and to observe if the presence of comic books in the library would attract younger readers to other literature as well.



The mosaic tile design in the Central Court at the Main Library reminds us of the library's legacy to northwest Ohio and the rest the state.





Wright reported that the Children's Room staff was "not successful in finding why children like comics" and that the popular books adjacent to the comics did not circulate any more frequently than when they were placed in their usual places on the shelves.<sup>5</sup>

As World War II ended in Europe, Russell Schunk resigned as librarian of the Toledo Public Library. On November 1, 1945, Herbert M. Sewell was named librarian, a promotion from assistant librarian. He had been with the Toledo Public Library staff since 1942, having come to Toledo from Fort Hayes in Columbus and Oberlin College. Robert Franklin, who had joined the Toledo Public Library earlier in 1945, was named as Sewell's assistant librarian. Franklin had formerly been head of the Shelby County Libraries, which surround Memphis, Tennessee.

The Vitrolite murals in the Central Court are a hallmark of the Main Library. The Vitrolite murals have been preserved through all phases of library expansion and renovation.

Facing page: Central Court—the more times change, the more things remain the same.



 $The \ former \ Business-Technology \ Department, \ 1940, \ showcased \ unique \ art \ deco \ gates.$ 



THE LUCAS COUNTY LIBRARY ADDS BOOKMOBILES AND IMPROVEMENTS

The momentum of bookmobile service, which began in 1937, was maintained with the purchase of a second bookmobile in 1941. Eighteen Ohio counties had a total of twenty-five library bookmobiles and Lucas County now operated two of them. The second vehicle concentrated on service to adults at its thirty biweekly stops, since the original bookmobile mainly served children.<sup>6</sup>

The Lucas County Library fleet gained a third bookmobile in 1951, which made the Lucas County Library only the third public library in Ohio to have three such vehicles serving patrons. Having three vehicles permitted the Lucas County Library to use two of them at schools that lacked libraries and the other for general community stops.

In the early years, Lucas County Library bookmobiles even stopped at individual rural farmsteads to deliver specifically requested items. Such stops included parking upwind of barnyards, but they also provided the chance for buying truly farm-fresh eggs and produce. Given such an intimate level of

Card catalogs in the Historic Main Library, from a bygone era, were replaced by computer terminals with instant access to the library's entire collection.



The bookmobile and its many incarnations, circa 1956 above, and circa 1973 facing page, provide continuous service to the residents of Lucas County.

service, one can easily understand the determination of the Lucas County Library to staff the bookmobiles as a means of extending library service throughout the county.<sup>7</sup>

More bookmobiles and improvements to other Lucas County Library facilities in the early 1950s boosted its circulation. For example, circulation reached a new record high of 490,420 items for 1952. The library's annual circulation topped the half-million mark in 1954 with 528,704 items, which was about equally divided between adult and juvenile loans.<sup>8</sup> An increase in the county's population outside of municipalities to almost 80,000 in 1955 and a 160 percent rise in registered borrowers also helped, according to a *Blade* news item at the time.<sup>9</sup>

In 1954, the Lucas County Library headquarters building at Maumee gained \$150,000 in new facilities. A new four-vehicle garage for the bookmobiles and other equipment was a major improvement, as was the expansion of the circulation area, the enlargement of the Children's Room, and the provision of offices, including a library board room. This set of improvements came only after several years of insufficient revenue from the state local situs intangibles tax and negotiation with the county commissioners.

Two more major enhancements came to the Lucas County Library in the 1950s. First, a fourth bookmobile was added in 1956 and it was devoted to general community service. It made sixty-four community stops, forty-eight "house stops," and one institution stop as part of its two-week schedule. The second improvement was the final addition to the headquarters building in Maumee in 1958. Programming, for both adults and children, had been a strong tradition at the Lucas County Library for years, and the opening of a 300-person capacity auditorium connected to the library building was a crowning achievement for supporting that programming. The \$167,000 addition was completely furnished with kitchen facilities, audio-visual equipment, and chairs so that it was a full-function site for adult learning and children's activities.



#### PEACE BRINGS FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In October 1948, the Toledo Public Library took a major step into nonprint formats when it established a 16 mm educational films collection for



A bicentennial bookmobile, circa 1976.

loan. The films were an instant success, with 616 loans reaching a total audience of 23,193 people in 1948. For the full year of 1950, loans of the 292 titles totaled 7,563. The librarian noted that churches, civic and social organizations, and individuals were the three largest categories of borrowers. In its second full year of operation, 313,772 people attended 7,463 showings.<sup>12</sup>

In 1955, the nonprint resources further expanded. Nonmusical recordings were purchased and loaned. The initial 149 records included poetry, drama,

speeches, and language instruction for five different languages.<sup>13</sup>

With the war now over, the Toledo Public Library added to its branch locations. The intersection of Monroe Street and Central Avenue had developed into the city's first suburban retail district with the opening of the Colony Shopping Center in 1941. The subsequent growth of that area convinced library trustees that a branch was needed there, for the closest branch, West Toledo, was several miles away to the northeast on Sylvania Avenue. On December 10, 1950, the Sanger Branch Library opened in a rented storefront at 2022 West Central Avenue, near McKinley Elementary School. The board named the branch to recognize the twenty-eight years of service by Sigmond Sanger, who was a trustee from 1918 to 1945.

Also in 1950, the library board changed the job titles of the head librarian and assistant librarian to director and assistant director, respectively. With so many other "librarians" on staff, the new titles better represented the executive roles of the two top leaders in the Toledo Public Library.

One consequence of World War II did not fully impact the libraries until the early 1950s—the baby boom. In his annual report for 1954, Toledo Director Herbert Sewell noted that the library had achieved its highest circulation to children in its history. Children in the first eight grades of school had borrowed 56 percent of the library's total annual circulation. Furthermore, the children (and presumably their parents) did most of their business at the branch libraries, which accounted for two-thirds of the system's total circulation that year. The director cited the postwar baby boom as a major cause of this increase in usage, which was up 12 percent over the preceding year.<sup>14</sup>



The bookmobile is a popular way to get materials to patrons. Here, in the summer of 1957, children line up to get books, forsaking the ice cream man.

That trend continued into 1955, when children checked out more than 1 million books for the first time in library history. The youngsters' 1,014,177 books represented 58 percent of the library's total of 1,757,886, which was an increase of 5 percent over 1954.<sup>15</sup>

## ROBERT FRANKLIN SUCCEEDS HERBERT SEWELL AS DIRECTOR

Herbert Sewell resigned in 1955 and relocated to Madison, Wisconsin, to teach at the University of Wisconsin. Library trustees named Assistant Director Robert Franklin as his successor.

Two strategic issues occupied much of Franklin's time during his tenure, which continued into 1970. One issue was the growing inadequacy of the local situs intangibles tax as a funding source for nearly all public libraries in Ohio. Adopted by the Ohio General Assembly in the 1930s, the intangibles tax was a levy on the income derived from stocks, bonds, and other investments. By law, public libraries in each Ohio county were to have top priority in receiving this tax revenue as collected in their respective county. The problem was that many counties' intangibles tax income was not adequate to meet the public libraries' growing expenses. Lucas County was one of those counties. In 1964, the three library systems in Lucas County at the time—Lucas

County Library, Sylvania Public Library, and Toledo Public Library—presented requests for funding that exceeded the total income of the county's intangibles tax collection.

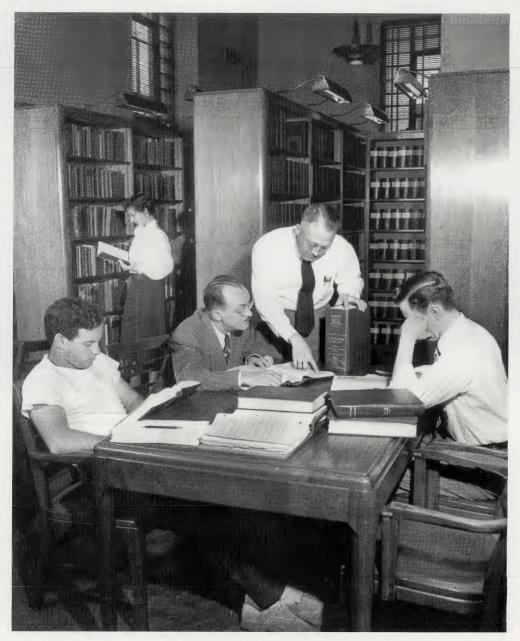
The second issue related directly to the first: a worsening ability of the library to offer competitive salaries, especially for professional positions. As the intangibles tax income failed to grow in most counties, libraries in those counties had less money to devote to salaries and other budget items. The only alternative was to employ fewer staff, especially professionals, who received higher salaries. At the Toledo Public Library, the number of professional staffers declined 16 percent (or twelve positions) between 1951 and 1965.

The trustees tried to ease the staffing shortage in 1948 by establishing a new job classification of "library aide." This category represented staff members who had a college degree but no library science degree. They did some public reference work, and most patrons probably assumed them to be bona fide "librarians." The salary range for this classification was between the clerical and the professional salary schedules. The program worked well enough so that by 1964, library aides had expanded to three salary levels, and nearly two dozen library aides were employed in 1965. This tactic also helped the libraries cope with a general shortage of library science graduates around the nation.

Despite these problems of income and staffing, the Toledo Public Library worked to extend and improve public service in the 1950s and 1960s and enjoyed increased public usage. The breadth and depth of questions that the library staff worked so hard to answer was matched by the range of unique personalities of those who asked the questions. The local library system was well on its way to becoming "the information place," not just a place where one could check out bestsellers.

On the branch libraries front, the Locke Branch Library, one of the original Carnegie branches, was renovated and received new furnishings in 1962. The Point Place Branch moved into its own new building at 110th and Summit Streets in 1964. The Sanger Branch moved from rented quarters into its own new building in the Kenwood Shopping Center in 1957. This prime location in west Toledo helped explain the branch's high usage and the need to increase the size of the branch in 1968. Besides these improvements, Director Franklin urged that branches be planned for the new suburbs in South Toledo and the southwestern region of East Toledo in order to bring library service closer to residents, especially children.<sup>17</sup>

A new branch library for South Toledo became a reality in 1968. Named Heatherdowns Branch Library, in line with then current Toledo Public Library practice to designate branches with a geographic-based name, the new branch was on Glanzman Road, just east of Byrne Road. It filled a gap in the service areas between the South Toledo and Toledo Heights Branches to the north and Maumee Library (part of the Lucas County Library) to the south.



The Technology Department, circa 1950.



The Historic Main Library was built by the Public Works Administration at a cost of \$1.5 million. It measures 183,161 square feet and has the capacity for more than a million items. The new branch was truly distinctive, with a circular shape and a '60s design that led to it later being termed "the Starship Heatherdowns." This was the last branch library the Toledo Public Library added before the merger of all public libraries in Lucas County in 1970.

The technology trend's great impact on library operations continued in the 1960s. Photocopiers became part of the equipment at libraries. The first machine appeared at the Main Library in March 1963; by the end of the decade, the Main Library had three photocopiers and nearly each branch had at least one. As with most technology, the consequences were mixed. On the positive side, the library believed that the ability to photocopy materials reduced the loss of such items by persons unwilling to write out a copy of the information they wanted. Fewer magazines and pamphlets disappeared, and fewer missing pages in books were discovered. On the negative side, the easy ability to photocopy copyrighted materials raised legal questions of "fair use" that have persisted ever since.<sup>18</sup>

The year 1964 witnessed the Toledo Public Library loaning more of the items it circulated than ever before, with a total of 2,444,178—thanks to the

patronage of 137,625 registered borrowers. The system's collection now numbered 836,000 bound volumes (books and magazines), and reflecting its expansion into other formats, the collection also included 16 mm films, phonograph records, microfilm reels, filmstrips, and uncounted thousands of pamphlets, periodicals, newspaper clippings, and photographs.

The decade of the 1960s included at least one other impressive record-breaking occasion. On the evening of March 10, 1969, more than 2,000 persons visited the Main Library to view a display of artwork by local school children. For two hours this throng surged about all the public spaces of the Main Library locating the various classes' artwork, all of which had a theme of anti-pollution. The library noted that traffic was jammed and the parking capacity within the vicinity of the library was far exceeded.<sup>19</sup>

## THE SYLVANIA PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

Sylvania Township and the surrounding suburbs were growth areas during this period. One of the consequences was a new site for a new Sylvania Public Library building. In 1958, the library relocated from the converted Burnham residence to a new facility at the corner of Monroe Street and Silica Drive, its present location.

Further extension of services was via libraries established in Sylvania schools. By the time of the merger in 1970, five of the seven elementary schools and one of the two junior high schools had libraries in their buildings.<sup>20</sup>

By 1960, the Sylvania Public Library was circulating 193,380 volumes annually, which was a 23 percent increase over 1959. No doubt part of the explanation was the new building that opened in 1958. In 1960, registered borrowers had grown to nearly 7,600 and the reference staff had answered more than 5,600 questions.<sup>21</sup>

### THE LUCAS COUNTY LIBRARY GROWS IN THE 1960s

The Lucas County Library's very successful experience in operating bookmobiles since 1937 received national recognition in 1962, when Director Dorothy Strouse was the keynote speaker at the Bookmobile Section of the annual conference of New York State Librarians. Her presentation was titled "Bookmobile: Showcase or Stepchild?" and in it she recounted the Lucas County Library's experience as well as that of other Ohio counties with bookmobiles. She also related her work as a member of the American Library Association's Committee on Standards for Bookmobile Services.<sup>22</sup>

One of Strouse's objectives was to build a system of independent branch libraries that were not located in schools and were well provided with materi-

als and furnishing. Much progress occurred in the 1960s when three such branches joined the Reynolds Corners Branch and the Ottawa Hills Branch. In 1961, the Washington Branch opened as a new agency, replacing a library station in Trilby School. The design, which featured a "sawtooth" roof of poured concrete panels, was without interior support columns, allowing great flexibility in the layout of shelves and other furnishings.<sup>23</sup>

The establishment of the Waterville Branch Library was another step forward for the Lucas County Library and its patrons in the southwest portion of Lucas County. The 2,600-square foot branch opened in September 1964. The \$85,000 branch at 800 Michigan Avenue, adjacent to Waterville Park, replaced cramped library quarters in Waterville Elementary School. Its opening climaxed a drive that began in 1927, when the Waterville Chamber of Commerce appealed to the county school board for a separate branch library. The new branch also increased its public service from three to five days and added more evening hours.

One year later, Strouse's vision of independent branches advanced further with the January 1, 1965, opening of the Oregon Branch Library in a 4,100-square foot storefront in a shopping center at Navarre Avenue and Coy Road. Oregon and Jerusalem Townships had had Lucas County Library service since 1922, but only via book collections in school buildings and later in combination with bookmobile stops. Strouse termed the opening of this branch "an act of faith," since the Lucas County Budget Commission did not provide any funding for it. Only by practicing internal economies and ending its contract with the Oregon School Board was the Lucas County Library able to amass sufficient funds. However, Strouse believed that "many people want and will use books readily available in a permanent location at convenient hours." 24

It was somehow appropriate that during this succession of new branch libraries, Strouse was selected as Librarian of the Year at the Ohio Library Association's 1964 annual conference in Cleveland. The recognition honored her accomplishments as head of the Lucas County Library since 1929 and her status as a nationally known expert on bookmobiles. She previously had served as president of the Ohio Library Association in 1945–46.<sup>25</sup>

### THE COUNTY'S LIBRARIES MERGE

An early public mention of a merger of the three public library systems in Lucas County came in 1925. The alleged catalyst for Toledo Public Library Librarian Carl Vitz to make that suggestion was the pending establishment of a separate library for Sylvania. As part of building a new high school (the current Burnham Building), the Sylvania superintendent of education proposed including a library that would serve the entire Sylvania community and that would receive about \$6,000 in county funds. The Vitz plan would consolidate the Lucas County Library, the pending Sylvania Public Library, and the



Toledo Public Library. He stated that he believed a combined system could be operated "more advantageously" for county residents.

The Maumee Advance–Era newspaper probably spoke for a majority of county residents outside of Toledo when it blasted the plan as another example of Toledo's "abounding egotism and overweening avarice." Strongly disagreeing with Vitz's assertion that the merger would be advantageous, the Maumee newspaper argued that such a merger would result in "the finest county library in the state, if not in the United States" becoming simply a "corrupt partisan political system." The Lucas County Library Board would oppose the plan, the paper reassured its readers. The suggestion died quickly.

The final story of the merger of the three systems began in 1961. The context of the time—both locally and, with regard to libraries, nationally—is important to the issue. Locally, the postwar period included many annexations of adjacent parcels of land into the City of Toledo. This legal process raised tempers on both sides of the issue, but the city's acquisitions generally moved ahead. In September 1958, following many smaller annexations, the

The Social Science Department, December of 1951.

largest annexation since Point Place joined the city in 1937 occurred as Heatherdowns, the region between Toledo and Maumee, came within the city's boundaries. Further annexations took place in the 1960s. In fact, 22 per-

cent of Toledo's 1970 population of 383,818 people was gained through annexations since 1960.<sup>27</sup>

### SUCH THINGS HAPPEN IN A LIBRARY

A talented and dedicated librarian in a central library with a strong book collection built up over the decades, such as Toledo enjoyed, is a powerful combination to meet society's information needs. The following excerpt from the 1948 annual report of the Toledo Public Library is a fine example.

"A man phoned the Reference Department in May to verify the highest mountain in the world. Samuel S. McConoughey, head of the Reference Department, quoted authority for Mt. Everest's claim (29,141 feet), but the man said his encyclopedia (People's, copyright 1888) recorded a Mt. Hercules in New Guinea, 32,783 feet high. Mr. McConoughey, who possesses one of those retentive minds invaluable in reference work, recalled a recent newspaper article about a famous hoax book published in 1875 (J. A. Lawson's Wanderings in New Guinea), purporting to be a true record of travels in New Guinea, which described actually nonexistent natural wonders of that island so convincinally as to take in a leading publisher of England. The Toledo Public Library has an old copy in its stacks, with a newspaper clipping of 1910 pasted in, exposing the hoax, and with a valid looking map in the back which sure enough shows the imaginary Mt. Hercules' height. It was from this source that the telephone inquirer's home encyclopedia had taken its data."

Fortunately for local library patrons, Reference Librarian McConoughey continued his outstanding service for three more decades until he retired.

During the same period, other tax-funded government units were looking into closer cooperation, with a motive of more effective operations for their citizens. In the early 1960s, representatives of several local governments began meeting informally as the Area Cooperation Committee. By mid-1968, this group had incorporated as the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, complete with a small permanent staff and funding from member government units.

On the national level, public libraries' information resources were growing. As library service in Lucas County demonstrated, libraries had become much more than places just for bestsellers or even just for items in print format. At the same time, libraries were networking more and more, especially as technology advances enabled them to share information more easily and faster, albeit sometimes at greater cost. The libraries were challenged to provide patrons with maximum access to the richest possible collection of resources that each library's budget allowed. Consolidation of library systems into larger systems was one method of making greater resources more available to patrons, in the opinion of many library professionals and leaders.

With these strong currents of annexation and consolidation flowing about Lucas County in the 1960s, it was not a surprise that the local libraries were seen as appropriate entities for a merger. The issue arose early in the decade.

Following state law, the three libraries routinely submitted their individual requests for intangibles tax revenue to the county budget commission in October of 1961. The three libraries' combined request for 1962 totaled \$1,771,074 (Lucas County Library asked for \$378,932, Sylvania Public Library asked for \$82,370, and Toledo Public Library asked for \$1,309,772). The requests totaled 9.6 percent more than requested for 1961, when the county budget commission had actually allocated \$1,340,140. Nearly two months later, the budget commission allocated \$1,668,079 to be shared among the three libraries.

At the budget hearing, Lucas County Prosecutor Harry Friberg, chairman of the budget commission, urged the three library boards to merge. He believed that since all of the systems were required to provide service to all county residents, since their districts overlapped, and since their revenue came from the same tax source, a merger was a logical step. It would eliminate some organizational duplication and it would better provide for equitable funding and service as well. The bottom line would be a more efficient library, he asserted. A necessary preliminary step would be for the Lucas County Library to convert itself into a county district library, a legal formality.<sup>28</sup>

Reaction varied. The Toledo Public Library trustees endorsed the Friberg proposal at a special board meeting on November 3. Library trustee Paul Block, Jr., publisher of *The Blade*, also submitted his undated letter of resignation as a sign of his personal support for the merger of the boards. The rest of the Toledo Public Library trustees followed suit to show that Toledo did not wish to dictate a merger process.

Later that month, the Lucas County Library trustees voted to table the resolution that Friberg had sent to all three boards calling for merger support. In a letter to the county prosecutor, Lucas County Library Board President Richard B. Johnson said that the library was now providing excellent service. Before taking any steps toward a merger, the board wanted to learn more about the alleged advantages of such a merger. Therefore, the Lucas County Library board suggested having outside library experts study the proposal. The Maumee-based trustees suggested having the library trustees of all three systems meet informally to discuss the proposal. The Sylvania trustees did not take an official stand on the proposed merger at that time, but they later expressed opposition.

Following the boards' expression of views, *The Blade* shared its opinion in several editorials. In the paper of October 25, an editorial termed the merger "an attractive idea" and "sensible." Since all three libraries in Lucas County receive their tax monies from the same source, "Why should they go their separate ways, uncoordinated in their planning, duplicating their efforts, and wasting the time of three boards of trustees when one could do the job?" Furthermore, in a merged system, "library buildings could be more efficiently and economically located," the editorial said. In short, such a merger "would better serve the whole county."<sup>29</sup>

Just a few days later, *The Blade* acknowledged that such a merger was not primarily a legal problem, but ultimately one dependent on such local factors as rivalries, control, and autonomy. These concerns existed within each of the libraries' communities and within each of the libraries themselves, the paper admitted. However, such influences should not bog down further investigation, it concluded.<sup>30</sup>

On November 25, the paper termed the Lucas County Library's decision to table the merger resolution as "unfortunate," though it acknowledged the

library's offer to meet and discuss the matter. The editorial ended with the expressed hope that the merger would proceed. Then, in an editorial on December 29, 1961, the library's trustees' call for an outside evaluation was judged to be "not really necessary." There was no need for outside consultants, the newspaper alleged. "We have qualified professional librarians. We have boards of trustees who have worked in the field of policy," the editorial continued. The paper strongly implied that Lucas County Library's suggestion was only a delay tactic.<sup>31</sup>

County Prosecutor Harry Friberg followed up on Lucas County Library's call for an outside study by asking Walter Brahm, state librarian of Ohio, to conduct such a study. In his reply, Brahm, who had been assistant librarian of the Toledo Public Library from 1938 to 1942 and had played a major role in designing the new Main Library, declined to conduct the survey. He cited the fact that his views favoring such countywide consolidations were well known already and, thus, some people might feel his study would not be objective. Brahm also added that such a merger would not result in immediate economies but should produce savings over a longer period of time.<sup>32</sup>

For the next several years, the merger option was the subject of sporadic discussions, and the topic arose annually when the three library systems competed for the intangibles tax allocations from the county budget commission. For example, in 1963, the libraries' requests included one from the Sylvania Public Library seeking money to open new branches in the Sylvania Public Schools. Representatives from both the Lucas County Library and the Toledo Public Library reported that nationally the trend was away from public libraries in schools, because adults were less likely to use them. A local newspaper opined that the merger would help resolve this difference of outlook and conflicting use of public funds.<sup>33</sup>

At the budget commission meeting to allocate the 1964 funds, the Sylvania Public Library representative "indicated that the board might be interested in a merger," according to Friberg, a member of the commission. This was the most positive sign in three years, and Friberg moved quickly to take advantage of this opening. Within a few days he had drafted a letter to the three libraries' trustees that described the merger procedure in some detail. Hoping to put some concerns to rest, he explained that all twenty-one library trustees would retain their seats for the first year of the consolidation. Only after the initial year of the merger, when many of the issues would have been resolved, would a new board of seven trustees be organized. He closed his letter with an offer to write the needed resolutions for their respective boards to act upon.

Friberg's letter was well received at the Lucas County Library and the Toledo Public Library but not at the Sylvania Public Library. A public meeting on February 10 in Sylvania drew more than fifty people, including many mothers and delegations from seven parents' and neighborhood organiza-



tions—all opposing the proposed merger. The primary fear was that the merger would lead to closing the libraries in Sylvania school buildings. Such anticipated closings would be a clear sign that control had left Sylvania's hands and moved to Toledo. Sylvania Public Library trustees attended the meeting, and before the meeting adjourned, they voted unanimously to oppose the merger.

Friberg responded a week later by writing to Lucas County Library and Toledo Public Library trustees, saying that a merger could still move ahead by including only their libraries. *The Blade* quickly weighed in on the side of the merger, without Sylvania if necessary. The paper's editorial could not understand Sylvania's position, especially as Sylvania stood to gain the most from becoming affiliated with the larger systems.<sup>34</sup> The lack of further action by the Lucas County Library or the Toledo Public Library would seem to indicate a preference for a three-way merger.

The movement to merge once again slowed after this flurry in early 1964. However, behind-the-scenes pressure was presumably being maintained as pro-merger advocates lobbied for consolidation. The next step came in April of 1966, when Lucas County Library trustees met with Lucas County commissioners and they agreed to designating the Lucas County Library a county district library. This change would clarify some boundary and service complications and pave the way for a merger. Lucas County thus became only the second county in Ohio to have such library coverage. Hamilton County had been a county district for some years, and the Cincinnati Public Library had been providing service throughout the county as the only public library. Most Ohio counties have several independent library systems within their boundaries.

The Blade praised the parties for finally moving ahead, and it reminded readers that libraries elsewhere in Ohio and around the nation were watching

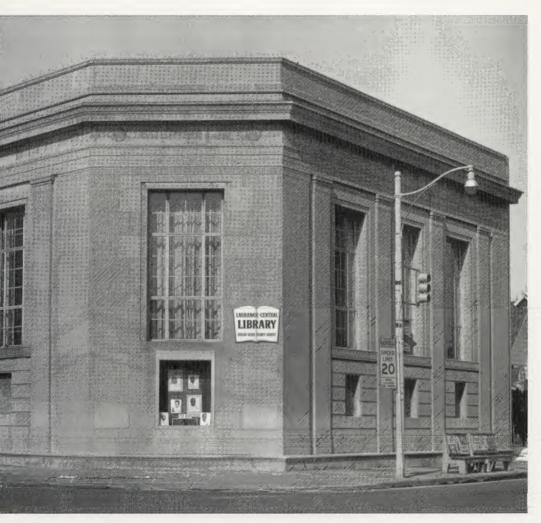
Ground was broken on October 6, 1964, for a new Oregon Branch Library.

The old Lagrange—Central Branch Library.



the proposed merger issue here. The paper urged that a merger should now be planned with "studied deliberation and in a way that satisfies all concerned that the coordination through merger would produce better service to readers with the same money than does competition among the three systems."<sup>35</sup>

The merger issue again simmered for the next two years, with intermittent contact among the trustees of the three libraries. Those meetings led to each of the libraries voting for a merger, at least in principle. The Lucas County Library board approved the concept on February 10, 1966, and the



Toledo Public Library trustees concurred on February 19. The Sylvania Public Library Board also considered the issue on February 10, but it postponed final action until early March, when the trustees also voted in favor.<sup>36</sup>

With this triple endorsement of the principle of a merger, the three boards arranged with Nelson Associates, a New York–based management firm, to study the county, its libraries, and a possible merger. The \$28,750 contract cost was covered by the three library systems, including \$13,750 in federal funds via the State Library of Ohio.<sup>37</sup> Nelson Associates issued its 200-page report in November 1968. Describing the current three-libraries situation as

"artificial," the report strongly recommended consolidation. It cited many advantages that would come to the community, including more financial effectiveness. A new library system would combine the strengths of the three predecessors and conduct better strategic planning for the future.<sup>38</sup>

With each of the libraries agreeing to the principle of a merger, and with the Nelson Associates report as a guide, the three boards established a Steering Committee, with three trustees from each system. The group first met on March 20, 1969, and elected Thomas H. Anderson, a Lucas County Library trustee, chairman; Dr. Richard Perry, a Sylvania Public Library trustee, vice chairman; and Joseph Nathanson, a Toledo Public Library trustee, secretary. Initial issues included finding a director for the new system and consolidating the three libraries' 1970 budgets for presentation to the county budget commission.

Reviewing the situation in July of 1969, *The Blade* saw merger opposition based on the two smaller systems' concerns that Toledo would dominate such a merged system. Other factors included a loss of local control and the need to consolidate the boards and administrations of the three systems. In the course of an "eight-year courtship—which has been rocky at times," these concerns were addressed and "marriage now seems assured" via a merger that would become effective January 1, 1970, as the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library.<sup>39</sup>

Once the three libraries agreed to the merger, more detailed preparations to implement the plan moved ahead, generally outside of public view. Only one issue gained notoriety during the remainder of 1969: selection of a director for the new library.

The process began when the Steering Committee advertised the position nationally in the spring of 1969. The announcement reflected the advice the committee received from twenty library professionals, state librarians, and deans of library schools concerning the type of person and the leadership qualities that the position required. Interviews were expected to begin in July.

The local candidate most often spoken of for the director's position was Robert Franklin, then director of the Toledo Public Library. He had joined the Toledo Public Library in 1945 as assistant director, having already been director of the Shelby County, Tennessee, libraries. Upon the departure of Herbert Sewell, Franklin was promoted to director of the Toledo Public Library in 1955. Dorothy Strouse, director of Lucas County Library since 1929, had announced her retirement at the end of 1969. After offering to serve in any capacity within the new system to help make the initial merger as smooth as possible, she did serve as head of the combined branch libraries for about one year after the merger.

The Steering Committee screened forty applications and personally interviewed four candidates. One of the four was Lewis Naylor, director of the Cuyahoga County Library (the system surrounding Cleveland) since 1955.

He received his library degree from Western Reserve University and had served as an administrator at the Canton Public Library and as director of the Muncie, Indiana, Public Library prior to the Cuyahoga County position. *The Blade* of November 13, 1969, carried the announcement of Naylor's selection. He was to be officially appointed at the first meeting of the new combined library board in January 1970.<sup>40</sup>

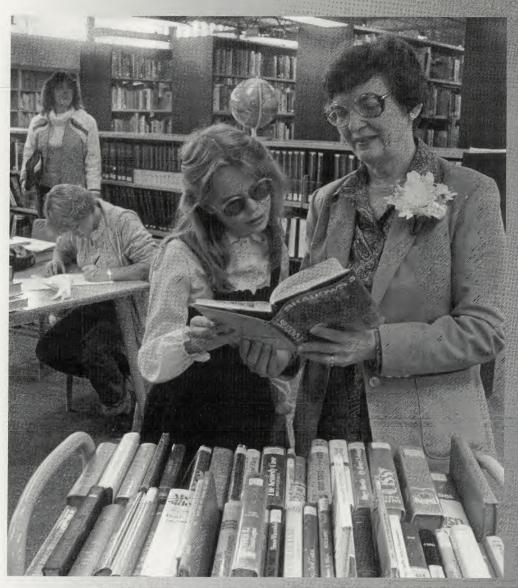
In a November 25, 1969, editorial, *The Blade* berated the Steering Committee for its selection of Lewis Naylor. The appointment of a director for the new library system should have been "the occasion for cheers and back patting, but it isn't" the editorial began. Rather, this action "constitutes the shabbiest of raw deals." In a nearly foot-long editorial, the paper accused the Steering Committee—and especially Tom Anderson and the Lucas County Library trustees—of rigging the entire merger first to preserve the job of Lucas County Library Director Strouse until her retirement and then to avoid giving the new directorship to Toledo Public Library Director Franklin. The hiring of an outsider at a higher salary and the retention of Franklin as head of the Main Library added insult to the basic injury, the editorial continued."

The following Sunday issue of *The Blade* carried a profile of Naylor, which was based on an interview conducted in Cleveland. The director-designate made several points in the article. First, he saw the merger as having the potential for becoming a model of combining urban, suburban, and rural libraries. The pending consolidation was in sharp contrast to the merger talks among Cuyahoga County's eight library systems for the past thirty-five to forty years, which had foundered on competing communities' rivalries, he said.

Second, he believed that libraries must not be "literary museums" but "where the action is" for their communities. Involvement with the community and the issues that community residents are dealing with is fundamental to a successful library. That rightly includes more than books, he continued, citing parking at library facilities as a necessity. He concluded the interview by saying, "There is need for change from traditional book-dispensing operations to a rapid and consistent means of community information and ideas."

A few days after the Naylor article, *The Blade* editorialized again. It expressed strong doubts about the incoming Naylor administration, given the new director's seeming de-emphasis on books. The "new image" Naylor described for the combined libraries, the editorial said, would stress "extracurricular activities." The paper inferred that the core services and fundamental resources of the libraries, especially the Main Library, would be neglected. The editorial closed by reminding readers that Robert Franklin had been passed over as director of the new system. Less than a dozen letters to the editor were published on this issue, with an equal number on each side.

This controversy notwithstanding, the new Toledo–Lucas County Public Library came to life on January 1, 1970, as the next major evolution in public library service to the residents of Lucas County.



Branch librarians assist patrons at the former Sanger Branch Library in October of 1981.

A new Sanger Branch Library was constructed just blocks away and opened for public service in March of 2000.

## CHAPTER 5

# One County One System 1971-1994

THE 1970s: MAKING THE MERGER WORK

NOT TOO LONG AFTER THE MERGER, LIBRARY DIRECTOR LEWIS Naylor described the new library system's setting: "The Toledo-Lucas County Public Library serves a half-million people in the 343 square miles of Lucas County. The highly industrialized environment includes ten cities and villages, 171 public and parochial schools, and a number of institutions involved in higher education, specialized training, and cultural activity. In this heterogeneous complex, the library serves as a major resource of information and plays a more active role than any other single enterprise in the daily life of the metropolitan area.

"The resources and services of the library provide opportunity and challenge to each citizen to become better informed and able to cope with today's demands and tomorrow's promise. . . . While improving the quality of service to the frequent user, efforts are being made to identify the needs of the non-user as well. The library will act to meet those needs."



A young reader is helped at the Ottawa Hills Branch Library, November of 1971.

Within this environment, the leadership of the newly created library worked to implement the merger and see that it succeeded in serving the county's residents. The new library's personnel officer, Margie Malmberg, aptly described the challenge in an article in the *Ohio Library Association's Bulletin*. "Let's face it—mergers, whether corporate or library, have their traumatic effects upon staff, upon the services they render, and sometimes upon the community served. Along with the challenges of change there are also the problems of former loyalties, differences in job techniques, sometimes differences in approaches to the simplest of problems."<sup>2</sup>

Malmberg, former manager of the Toledo Public Library's Business Department, noted that the new system had several assets that helped the merger work. One strength was an "intelligent, enthusiastic, community-minded board of trustees." Another advantage was the new director, Lewis Naylor, a leader with considerable experience in a metropolitan library system and who, being from none of the component libraries, brought no ties with



The original Washington Branch Library, circa 1971.

him that favored one over the other. Overall, the new library possessed a staff of "people willing and anxious to help," the most important ingredient for success.

Once the three institutions merged into one entity, the staff implemented the merger at all levels with standardized procedures, benefits, and policies. For example, a uniform salary schedule was adopted for the new system.

One of the most successful tactics was the formation of staff committees to examine operations, such as circulation, job descriptions, interlibrary loans, book selection, and cataloging. Each committee included staff members from each of the three former libraries. This committee work was beneficial on two counts. First, the collective efforts included many recommendations to combine procedures into workable policies for the new library, most of which were adopted. Second, in the course of committee meetings and preparing for the meetings, staff members became more familiar with new colleagues and gained a greater sense of ownership in the new library system.

The first staff development day was held October 1, 1971. The entire system was closed for one day so that all staff members could assemble in one location "for education, stimulation, and fellowship." The director of the Detroit Public Library, Clara Jones, was the keynote speaker and focused on

the leadership role potential for librarians. Other local community leaders also addressed the nearly 400 staff members in attendance.<sup>3</sup> This special day proved so useful for the staff that a second one was held on October 6, 1972, and a third one in September of 1973. Many such staff developments days

have subsequently helped the entire library staff discuss ideas, hear from outside experts, and prepare to perform their tasks better. Less well documented, but more pervasive as

Less well documented, but more pervasive as a benefit, was the merging of the three libraries' resources and dedicated staff members for countywide service. Staff who worked at the Sylvania Public Library or the Lucas County Library and then at the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library recalled how they kept lists of books that individual patrons had read so that titles would not be repeated. Such personal service also helped librarians suggest less popular titles that deserved to be read. The enlarged book collection after the merger gave them a much larger pool of titles to draw upon, especially in such genres as westerns.

Despite the pressures of making the merger work, Toledo–Lucas County Public Library lead-

ers kept the library linked to professional organizations on both the national and state levels. In 1973, Naylor served as president of the Public Library Association of the American Library Association, and Assistant Director Ardath Danford led the Ohio Library Association as president.

### NEW FORMATS ARE ADDED IN THE 1970s

A new format joined library resources in 1971 when the Records Lending Service began. Housed in the Fiction–Literature Department, the new collection included classical and rock music, as well as spoken and instructional recordings. In the following year, children's records became a category as well. The newly formed Friends of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library sought record donations from citizens, and they gained several thousand records to help begin the new service at the Main Library. By 1976, this audio resource had increased to include cassettes (added in 1975) and to have collections at eleven branch libraries besides the Main Library.

The library's formats grew in 1973 when a lending collection of 84 framed and 200 matted art prints was established at the Main Library. The range of artists stretched from old masters to more contemporary designers. Patrons could review the prints in the Art–Music–Sports Department and check out items for thirty days to dress up their home or office.



A reference librarian helps a patron with a question at the Main Library in 1971.



Library employees bid farewell to Library Director Robert Franklin, April 6, 1971.

The list of library formats expanded again in 1980 when video cassettes were available for loan, initially only at the Main Library. Both nonfiction/documentaries and popular released-in-theaters features were included in the collection. The library was on the leading edge of circulating this new medium, but it had waited for several years until it became clear whether the popular market was embracing the VHS or the Beta format. Public response was good and grew stronger as a greater percentage of households gained video units, and videos were placed in branch libraries. The format also attracted new borrowers to the library just for the videos. From a first full-year total of 22,753 tapes loaned, circulation soared to 130,663 in 1983, a meteoric rise of 470 percent. By 1985, the annual total reached 206,939.

Later in the decade, the format list grew again with the introduction of compact discs, or CDs, in the Main Library's collection in 1985. As when adding other formats earlier, the library balanced the public advantages of the new medium against the expenditure of public funds for this resource. In subsequent years, CD collections became a part of the branch libraries' resources as well.



The Audio-Visual Department has always been popular with teens. In 1972, they enjoyed records; today, it's CDs.

SERVICES ARE ADDED IN THE 1970s

To help link all of the branches and the Main Library, a daily delivery service was started in 1971. It provided a means of getting materials from the Main Library to any branch within twenty-four hours during weekdays.

By the end of 1971, the library had discontinued all direct service to local schools via bookmobiles, continuing the trend of separating public library service and school libraries that began decades earlier. This change in the service pattern allowed the bookmobiles to be redeployed. One of the units could now focus on service to the Lucas County areas furthest from the branch libraries; a second unit serviced central city neighborhoods; and a third bookmobile tailored its collection to seniors and visited rest homes and extended care facilities.

The library's fleet of bookmobiles took on a new look in 1973 when one of the vehicles was repainted inside and out. Students in the Toledo Museum of Art's Creative High School Workshop created the design and did the painting. Named the Page Coach, the bookmobile's new mission was to promote the library throughout Lucas County by showing up at local festivals and fairs



Central Court—where the action is, 1973.

and other popular sites, such as the Toledo Zoo. It was stocked with paper-backs for patrons of its other regularly scheduled stops as well. Apparently the Page Coach caught on with the borrowers, for it loaned 25 percent more items in the first year with its new paint job than in the previous year.

The library strengthened its role as the community memory. It also responded to the growing patron usage of the Local History and Genealogy Department. Plans were drawn up in 1971 to relocate the agency from its second-floor area to a space three times larger on the third floor of the Main Library. The new quarters—the first public department on the Main Library's third floor—included a public reference room, a small conference room, a map room, a manager's office, and space for reference storage and clerical staff. It officially opened in the fall of 1972.

In 1973, the library's more active role in local history continued with the production of its first slide-tape program. The thirty-minute production, "The Toledo War, 1835–1836," presented the Ohio–Michigan boundary dispute. Members of the Local History Department staff took it to many meetings of local organizations.

The Main Library's circulation desk is always a busy place, as this picture from 1973 demonstrates.

These slide-tape productions proved so popular to audiences and effective in promoting the library's local history materials that by 1976, seven different programs had been produced. Funded through a grant from the National

Endowment for the Humanities, the programs included such important local topics as the Tiedtke Department Store, Toledo neighborhoods, the local fight for women's suffrage, Toledo in the 1920s, the experience of various ethnic groups in Toledo, and towns along the Maumee River.

Homebound Service began in November 1973. The Homebound Service librarian delivered library materials to Lucas County residents temporarily or permanently restricted to their homes and thus unable to visit the library themselves. This innovative service was strengthened in 1974, thanks to a \$52,000 federal grant.

Outreach to another population unable to visit the library started in 1977. A federal grant of \$65,000 under the Library Services and Construction Act permitted the extension of service into the Child Study Institute, the Lucas County Jail, and the Toledo House of Correction. The grant and the Lucas County and Toledo governments' cooperation with the library enabled staff to visit these three sites and maintain a limited collection in each one.

### TECHNOLOGY INCREASES IN THE 1970s

Technology continued as a growing trend at the library when the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library became the first public library in Ohio to go online with the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) in 1973. OCLC was a cooperative mainly of Ohio colleges and universities that promoted the sharing of computerized catalogs and produced ready-to-file catalog cards to member libraries. Beginning in 1974, the growing computer network also

aided the interlibrary loan process. The collections of other online libraries could be checked much more quickly and the desired item located and borrowed. It also increased the number of such loans that the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library made, because persons elsewhere could check the Toledo catalog remotely. A public computer terminal was added in the Central Court in 1975, enabling staff and patrons to check for titles throughout the catalog of OCLC member libraries. The library-to-library network continued to expand, reaching 1,729 libraries by 1978.

The ability of the Main Library to provide assistance to outlying communities took on more official status in 1971, when the State of Ohio set up a



network of multicounty cooperatives to foster the greater sharing of resources. That year, the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library became the reference center for nineteen libraries in nine northwest Ohio counties. By 1974, this regional organization had grown to include thirty-four separate library systems in twelve counties and operated under the name of NORWELD.

News from around the world, in easy-to-read newspaper form, has been a mainstay at the Main Library for several generations.

### A FINANCIAL CRISIS ARISES IN THE 1970s

The state local situs intangibles tax had virtually been the sole income for public libraries in Ohio since the 1930s. Even in its early years, that tax did a minimal job of providing adequate income for most Ohio libraries, and it also failed to grow sufficiently over decades. By the 1960s, the libraries in Lucas County encountered shortfalls of income more and more frequently. In fact, the annual process of dividing the insufficient funds among the three county libraries proved to be the first forum for discussing a merger of the three systems. Ultimately, merger was agreed to, though few thought it would totally resolve the problem of funding in the future.

At best, the 1970 merger bought a few years of postponement of the crisis, but the situation came to a head by 1974. Confronted by a severe short-



fall of intangibles tax revenue to cover operating costs, the library's board of trustees placed two property tax issues on the 1974 countywide ballot. One tax issue was for capital improvements and the other would have provided operating income. Both issues were defeated. Three years of greatly reduced book purchasing, some staff reductions, shortened public hours, and much deferment of needed maintenance followed.

By January 1977, the library faced a \$300,000 budget deficit due to the intangibles tax collection being virtually flat and falling badly

behind raging inflation. This shortfall came on top of several earlier years of curtailed operations.

As part of coping with this financial condition, the board announced that three branch libraries would be closed (Birmingham, Lagrange–Central, and South). These were three of the oldest branches, and they were consuming a disproportionately large percentage of usage. Their small size also limited their collection size, and patrons were able to find more items by visiting the larger branches.

Announcement of the board's intended action prompted public protest, especially from the affected communities. A "Neighbors United to Save Libraries" coalition was formed and it lobbied the local government to keep the libraries open. In response, the library trustees declared a moratorium on the closings.

Subsequently, the Lucas County commissioners allocated \$70,000 to the library and the City of Toledo also contributed funds via the federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). This support enabled the three branches to remain open through 1977.

The library's financial problems and its necessary methods of coping convinced a majority of voters to approve a 0.7-mill oper-

ating levy in 1977. The influx of additional revenue, beginning in 1978 and lasting for five years, saved the library from further deterioration and enabled it to build the library system that county residents deserved. To a great extent, 1978 and 1979 were years of catch up in the ordering of materials, attending to maintenance, and planning for the balance of the levy's funding period. For example, \$600,000 went for book purchases in 1978, compared to only \$250,000 in 1977. A sign that both the library and its patrons' usage quickly began to improve after the levy's passage were double-digit circulation increases in 1979 and 1980 as new materials became available and public hours were restored.



A Special Services librarian delivers books to a homebound patron in 1973.

Facing page: Homebound services are a longstanding tradition of the Toledo—Lucas County Public Library.

## DIRECTOR NAYLOR RESIGNS AND ARDATH DANFORD SUCCEEDS HIM

In the midst of the library's coping with its financial problems in 1977, Director Naylor reached a tough decision: he must resign, as his family needed to relocate to North Carolina. In June he submitted his resignation effec-

tive September 30, 1977.

The library trustees selected Assistant Director Ardath Danford to become director on October 1. She had been assistant director since June 1971, having joined the new Toledo–Lucas County Public Library system in 1970 as coordinator of adult services and shortly thereafter as assistant director and head of the Main Library as well. Prior to her Toledo–Lucas County Public Library service, Danford had been director of the Way Public Library in Perrysburg, Ohio, for ten years



Fantasy and Festival Week in July of 1973 gave children's librarians the opportunity to dress up and clown ground.

and had worked at the Lima (Ohio) Public Library earlier.

### THE MAIN LIBRARY EVOLVES IN THE 1970s

A building as large as the Main Library, and one fulfilling so many different demands, must remain flexible. In 1971, Film Services moved from its location on the first floor to the second, thus gaining considerably more space for its collection and its public service. In 1973, a portion of the building's Central Court was converted into a magazine and newspaper lounge. Public access to newspapers had been in a Newspaper Room located in the basement and reachable only via an outside stairway on the north side of the building. The new lounge was more easily reached and more of an integral area of the building. Its display racks presented thirty out-of-town newspapers and current issues of fifty magazines. In the same year, a Copy and Microfilm Center also was set up in the Central Court, offering patrons three photocopiers and three microfilm readers.



THE BRANCHES IMPROVE IN THE 1970s

With more than a half-century of service history behind them, the branch libraries of the merged system truly had become "the library" for their respective neighborhoods and communities. Branch patrons frequently considered the staff members as belonging to their extended families. That personal relationship would include truly personal service. One staff person, who has worked at many library locations, recalled that one Mott Branch patron was never seen but was an avid reader. She would call and ask for specific titles that her husband would subsequently come and get. The items were charged to her card, which the staff kept at the branch's circulation desk. She often baked a cake as a token of appreciation and her husband delivered it for the staff to enjoy.8

The history of branch libraries in the 1970s needs to be divided into two parts. The first part begins in 1970 and continues through the passage of the operating levy in 1977. The second part reflects the growth of the branch system after funding was ensured with the 1977 passage. During the first phase, the Mott Branch Library, one of the five original Carnegie-funded Toledo

The Central Court of Main Library is always the center of activity. Here a 1973 open house attracts patrons.



The Main Library information booth, 1973.

Facing page: The card catalog took up lots of room in the Central Court of the Historic Main Library. In 1973, no one imagined a single computer could hold all the information pictured, and still leave room for patrons to sit and read. Public Library branches, gained a new 5,000-square foot wing in 1974–1975. The expansion was possible due to a \$200,000 revenue-sharing grant from the City of Toledo.<sup>9</sup>

A fire destroyed the original Kent Branch Library, another of the original Carnegie branches, on December 1, 1974. The branch operated temporarily from a storefront on Collingwood Boulevard. In August 1976, the new Kent Branch opened in the former Academy of Medicine building, located on the northwest corner of Collingwood and Central Avenue on the corner diagonal from the earlier Kent Branch site.

While plans for a new Kent Branch were being made, a new site for the Reynolds Corners Branch came into being. That branch, originally a part of the Lucas County Library system, had been in a rented storefront on Dorr Street by Reynolds Road since 1958. The growth of this area of the community clearly demonstrated the need for a larger neighborhood library. That need was resolved in July 1975 when the branch moved into a 6,000-square foot rented storefront unit in a strip mall just off Dorr Street west of Reynolds Road, thus doubling the size of the older site.

The second (post-levy) phase was a busy time, as much deferred maintenance was caught up and an expansion of the branch system was planned, once income became available.

Two of the major expansion projects were a 3,150-square foot addition to



ONE COUNTY, ONE SYSTEM, 1971-1994



the Oregon Branch and a 5,000-square foot addition to the Waterville Branch. The Lagrange–Central Branch also was relocated from its own building (a former bank building acquired in the 1930s) into the Central–Lagrange Community Center at the corner of Central Avenue and Lagrange Street. Under an agreement with the City of Toledo, the library occupied a 2,500-square foot portion of the new building, with the library providing staff, materials, and furnishings. Initially the space was rent free, but some years later, the library began to pay rent to help with utility costs and operation of the community center.

The reassurance of funding also permitted the library to offer Sunday service at a branch library for the first time. Beginning on April 9, 1978, the Sanger Branch Library was open from 1:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. That branch was selected because it offered the largest book collection of all the branches, it had plenty of off-street parking, and it was centrally located in the county.

#### LEVY CAMPAIGNS ARE CONDUCTED IN THE 1980S

The passage of the 1977 levy resolved the financial crisis for the next five years. In 1982, the 0.7-mill levy needed to be renewed for another five years, and it was renewed by a four-to-one margin of victory. Lucas County voters clearly approved of the library's advancement since 1977.

In 1986, a new statewide funding source replaced the statewide intangi-

Below and facing page: Damage from a fire in December of 1974 at the Kent Branch Library.





The staff association belts out holiday songs in the Central Court, 1975.

bles tax. The new Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF) was an earmarked percentage of the state income tax. Predictions were that the LLGSF would prove to be a better source of funds for libraries over the years, including a greater potential for growth. Ironically, the first year of LLGSF funding fell 8.3 percent short of the predicted amount. In such circumstances, the voter-approved local operating levy proved to have even greater than usual value as it cushioned this momentary decline in library income.

Another levy campaign confronted the library community in 1987. A 1-mill ten-year levy replaced the earlier tax issue, and the voters gave it the largest plurality of all the twenty-three issues on the local ballot in November 1987. The levy's passage guaranteed that the momentum of success from earlier levies would be sustained. The increase in its revenue was focused on more materials and strengthened services, which residents had asked for via a community survey conducted earlier in the year. Included in the campaign pledges were a new Oregon Branch Library and improvements at several other branches. The levy cost the owner of a \$60,000 home—the county's average value—only \$18 per year, about the cost of one book. At the same time, the average library patron borrowed materials worth \$400 in a year. "The library is the best bargain in Lucas County," concluded Library Director Clyde Scoles.<sup>10</sup>



Director Danford Retires and Clyde Scoles
Succeeds Her

A book sale in 1975 brought out shoppers young and old.

At the end of 1984, Library Director Ardath Danford announced her decision to conclude thirty-three years of library service and retire effective June 30, 1985. Prior to being director for the past seven years, she had earlier been assistant director, adult services coordinator, and head of the Main Library of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library since the 1970 merger. Before her Toledo position, she had been director of Way Public Library in Perrysburg, Ohio, and had worked for the Lima Public Library.

The library trustees named Clyde S. Scoles to succeed Danford. He had joined the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library in 1978 as assistant director, having formerly been the library director in Zanesville, Ohio, and a subject department manager at the public library in Columbus, Ohio.

At the same time, library trustee Thomas H. Anderson declared his intention to leave the board at the conclusion of his current term. He had previously been a trustee of the Lucas County Library, beginning in 1953, and was subsequently named to the new Toledo–Lucas County Public Library Board in 1970. He served as the first president of the new system in 1970–1971.



Story hour at the Waterville Branch Library, 1975.



"Now, what's a computer again?"
Always on the cutting edge, the Main
Library receives some new technology
in 1975.



Technology Becomes More Dominant in the 1980s

The application of technology, especially computer-based information technologies, continued in the 1980s at an accelerating pace. In 1982, the library acquired its own computer and began the intricate process of preparing to go "online." One part of that big job was to prepare 1.2 million items—the third-largest public library collection in Ohio—for this computerization. Putting data into the computer about each item and attaching a bar code to each item were two massive tasks. Building a computer database of all registered library borrowers was yet another major undertaking. The library's initial computer system was based on TLM, the program developed by OHIONET, a nonprofit consortium of Ohio libraries. After extensive preparations and testing, the computerized circulation system officially went online in 1986.

Also in 1986, a pilot Microcomputer Laboratory with three Apple IIe computers, three IBM standard PCs, and one Macintosh was made available to the public at the Main Library. It was one of the first of its kind in the nation and offered free computer access to the general public. It proved popular enough to later be duplicated in all of the branches.

The "look" of local library sites changed forever in October 1989, when a computerized catalog system replaced the traditional card catalog drawers at Main Library. Online catalog terminals appeared in the branches in 1990 and offered patrons and staff members all of the information in the card catalogs. Plus, it could provide other features card catalogs could not, such as patrons at branches being able to check the entire library's holdings for a title, not just the branch they were visiting.

Technology extended this online catalog beyond library sites in 1991, when the Toledo Electronic Library became available via telephone lines to persons with computers and modems. These dial-in patrons also could reserve items, check library hours and locations, and learn about library activities.

In 1991, one of the most traditional resources in a public library—the encyclopedia—gave way to an electronic format. Twelve of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library locations gained this new medium for encyclopedias that year. The CD-based encyclopedias included animation and sound, as well as allowing key word searches. They quickly proved very popular to researchers of all ages.

In 1994, computer-based technology was blended with historic photographs as the Local History Imaging Project began. The project has digitized more than 100,000 images for the Local History Photographic Collection and has put many of the images on the Internet, enabling worldwide access to views from around Lucas County.

## 150 YEARS OF LIBRARY SERVICE ARE CELEBRATED

In 1988, the library celebrated 150 years of library service in Lucas County, which began with the establishment of the Young Men's Association Library in 1838. There were various observances during the year, but the climax came with "Library Lights—A Celebration of Service" in December. This festive event in the Central Court of the Main Library included a presentation by special guest Dick Cavett and a sit-down dinner for 300 library advocates—a fitting conclusion to an outstanding year.

### THE MAIN LIBRARY ADAPTS

The original design of the 1940-vintage Main Library included considerable flexibility for later remodeling and new layouts reflecting the library's evolving services and resources.

A major change came in 1982 in response to severe weather damage of the skylight over the Central Court of the Main Library. Rather than just repair the skylight, the administration recommended that the skylight be floored over and the adjacent space on the third floor be prepared as the new quarters

Right and facing page: The program Be A Giant, Read With Paul Bunyan at the Washington Branch Library, 1976.



for the History–Travel–Biography Department, then located on the first floor. The board concurred and, thus, 2,200 square feet of public service space was created out of the third floor's former storage area. A decorative touch came with the installation of four Tiffany-style stained-glass windows in the department, artifacts from the Soldiers Memorial Hall building, that was on the corner of Adams and Ontario Streets until it was razed in the 1950s.



ONE COUNTY, ONE SYSTEM, 1971-1994



For many years, the Toledo—Lucas County Friends of the Library have raised funds through public book sales to enhance library activities. Another benefit of this move was that the Business Department, History—Travel's neighbor on the first floor, expanded into the vacated space on that lower level. The artificial lighting installed in the new ceiling of the Central Court also provided brighter and more consistent light levels than the natural light skylight had.

The Main Library accommodated another evolution in 1987 when a Reading Enrichment Center opened in the Literature Department during National Library Week. The center contains materials to assist adults seeking to build their reading skills. Specially written books, video and audio cassettes, and computer terminals are in the center and are available at any time during the Main Library's open hours. An earlier tradition returned in 1994 when the Main Library again opened to the public on Sundays from 1:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. during the school year.

## THE LIBRARY SERVES THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The Government Procurement Center was established in 1983, the first such agency in a public library anywhere in the country. The Government Procurement Center provided counseling to small- and medium-sized businesses wishing to bid on federal government contracts. Specifications on fed-

eral contracts, relevant past contracts, and regulations on federal bidding were materials included in the Government Procurement Center and available to its clients free of charge. By the close of the 1990s, hundreds of millions of federal dollars had come to Government Procurement Center clients. The center closed in 2000 because of the healthy economy and the lack of support funds from the federal government.

In 1984, the library observed two significant anniversaries. It was the 100th anniversary of the library serving as a Federal Depository Library—a status inherited from the Toledo Public Library—and a distinction that was shared by only 1,370 libraries in the country. The library also marked the fiftieth anniversary of being a Patent Depository Library, one of about fifty depositories nationwide. At the time, the library possessed hundreds of thousands of government documents and more than four million patents, most with relevance to the local businesses. The addition of the CASSIS database from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in 1985 was an important upgrade to patent reference resources.

A craft activity at the Sylvania Branch Library in September of 1976.





Snoopy shares a story with some children in 1976 at the Oregon Branch Library.

# Brown Bag Concert Series Is Presented

The Main Library's attractive lawn and seating area on its Adams Street side and a desire to be a "good neighbor" in the downtown area were motives behind the start of the Brown Bag Concerts series in1981. Featuring small groups and individuals representing a wide range of musical styles, hour-long concerts have been presented during the lunch period, and literally tens of thousands of local citizens have enjoyed the concerts for the past two decades. Cancellations due to weather have been few, and the occasional presence of food vendors, Friends of the Library book sales, and chances for audience participation give the concerts a truly festive atmosphere.

# "Authors! Authors!" BOOKED FOR LOCAL AUDIENCES

Libraries and their supporters have great respect for the written word. Such respect naturally extends to the authors who produce the words. Believing that many local residents would like the personal opportunity to hear more notable, award-winning authors, the library formed a partnership

with *The Blade* and began "Authors! Authors!" in 1994. Ever since, these two organizations have presented dozens of outstanding writers to thousands of appreciative local readers.

One of the great appeals of the "Authors! Authors!" program series has been its variety of high-quality speakers. In any given season, fiction and non-fiction authors share their thoughts and stories, and the lineup also has included cartoonists and poets. A partial listing of "Authors! Authors!" participants includes Dr. Robert Ballard, John Berendt, Michael Beschloss, Ray Bradbury, Mary Higgins Clark, Nikki Giovanni, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Bob Greene, David Halberstam, Lynn Johnston, Chaim Potok, and Juan Williams. Authors with special local relationships have also graced the lectern: Frank Brady, Marcy Kaptur, P. J. O'Rourke, Steve Pollick, Mary Alice Powell, and Jack Torry.

## THE BRANCHES GROW, 1980-1994

A dramatic development immediately followed the 1982 levy renewal when representatives from southwest Lucas County asked the library for a

branch library in their area. Agents for the Village of Holland, Springfield Township, and the Springfield local schools cited the growth of the area and offered land for a branch. Such local support fostered planning, and in May of 1984, a totally new Holland Branch Library opened for service on McCord Road. This was the first new branch to be established since the Heatherdowns Branch opened in the 1960s as a Toledo Public Library facility.

Another major development was the planning for and opening of a new building for the Reynolds Corners Branch Library. Public usage proved too great for the rented storefront on Flaire Drive off Dorr Street. The library board judged a new subdivision that was being planned for Dorr Street, just east of Reynolds Road, to be a good site for a library-owned branch library, and ground was broken there in the spring of 1984. The 15,000-square foot branch opened to the public in April 1985 following a ceremony where 600 people were present.

A new Oregon Branch Library opened for public business in April 1989. The new 16,000-square foot building provided much more space for patrons and materials compared to the rented storefront that earlier served as the branch. Its location near the intersection of Navarre and Dustin Roads enabled all residents of eastern Lucas County to easily visit and make use of its extensive resources.



U. S. Senator John Glenn visits the library in September of 1979 for a grantsmanship workshop. With Senator Glenn is Library Director Ardath Danford, right, and Assistant Director Clyde Scoles, left.

A greatly enlarged Sylvania Branch Library opened in April 1990, fulfilling a pledge of the 1987 levy campaign. Expanded to 18,000 square feet, the branch serves northwest Lucas County, and its users showed their approval as they borrowed 20 percent more items from the new branch.

The Heatherdowns Branch in South Toledo became the second library location to add Sunday hours when it opened from 1:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. In 1991, the branch grew to 18,500 square feet by means of an addition. The original branch was circular in shape, so the design of a usable addition posed an extra challenge to architects and builders alike.



Packing up and moving the Lagrange— Central Branch Library, 1979.

# THE BIRMINGHAM CULTURAL CENTER

As a cooperative venture, the University of Toledo and the library established the Birmingham Cultural Center at the Birmingham Branch Library in East Toledo in 1984. Under the director of Dr. John Ahern of the University of Toledo's College of Education and Allied Professions, the center focused

attention on the ethnic groups of that neighborhood by means of monthly public programs. It also conducted oral history interviews and published accounts of ethnic traditions.

# THE ART TATUM AFRICAN-AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER

The library recognized a need to have a local resource center for materials documenting the experience and achievements of area African-Americans and thus opened the Art Tatum Center in 1989, located within the Kent Branch building.

#### THE LIBRARY LEGACY FOUNDATION

In December 1988, library trustee Robert Carlile announced the intention to form a nonprofit foundation at "Library Lights," the celebration of

150 years of library service in Lucas County. Fulfilling this pledge, the Legacy Foundation was officially established in 1989. Funds donated to the foundation enhance and expand the services available to the community, beyond what is possible within the library's regular operating budget. The foundation thus provides a tax-deductible mechanism for funding special projects and programs for the benefit of Lucas County citizens.

The foundation soon began raising funds through partnerships with local businesses for such traditional library activities as the annual Summer Reading Club. It also gained funding

for a new program, the Library Bus, which paid the transportation cost for local fourth-grade students to visit the Main Library.

To enhance adult programming and increase public awareness, the foundation presented May Mystery Weekend in 1990. This special programming included four well-known British mystery writers talking about their craft and the presentation of a murder mystery, "Overdue and Out of Circulation," in the Central Court of the Main Library. In the same year, the foundation headed up a celebration of the Main Library's fiftieth anniversary. About 300 people enjoyed "In the Mood—A Forties Kind of 50th," with its 1940s theme and complete with live music, dancing, refreshments, and entertainment.



The original Reynolds Corners Branch Library.



Activities have been a big part of the Children's Library.

## THE LEVY CAMPAIGN OF 1991

One of the factors behind the levy campaigns was a cutback in the level of state funding via the Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF). The LLGSF had originally earmarked 6.3 percent of the state income tax for public libraries since 1986, but in 1991, the state legislature capped this funding at 1991 levels for the next 18 months, which cost the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library nearly \$1 million in 1992 alone.<sup>11</sup>

The 1991 Library Task Force: Planning for the 21st Century concluded its evaluation of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library early in 1991. It recommended many improvements to the Main Library and each of the branches, as well as adjustments and additions to library services and resources. The library board accepted the task force's report and subsequently placed a 0.96-mill capital improvements levy issue on the 1991 ballot. A majority of the voters did not perceive these needs and the issue failed.



THE LIBRARY CONDUCTS STRATEGIC PLANNING

As the decade of the 1990s began, the library concentrated on preparing itself to meet the information needs of its county community for the next century. Growing public usage made this a high priority. For example, in 1993, the annual total of circulated items topped 6 million for the first time, and the Main Library's share of these items exceeded 770,000. Significantly, 27 percent of the total loans were nonprint, such as video and audio cassettes and CDs.

The library's physical structure was showing its age, with 60 percent of its building space dating from before World War II. Ten percent of the space even pre-dated World War I. Thus, much of the infrastructure at many library sites—wiring, heating, air conditioning, and plumbing—was inadequate, especially given the demands of increased computerization and greatly increased public usage. Previous efforts had greatly improved building access and movement within buildings for persons with physical handicaps, but a few sites still presented serious problems, and other buildings had areas that still needed improvement.<sup>12</sup>

A librarian staffs the information desk at the old Lagrange—Central Branch Library.

The 1991 Library Task Force: Planning for the 21st Century was organized with about forty local residents who represented every area of the county and every interest group. During a three-month period, these volunteers

reviewed the library system and recommended ways it needed to prepare itself for serving citizens into the next century.

THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

There had been a Friends of the Library (FOL) organization at the Toledo Public Library in the post—World War II era, but there is little documentation and it seemed to have become inactive after some years.

Re-establishing a Friends support network was a high priority of Lewis Naylor, the first director of the library system created by the 1970 merger. He had developed a Friends organization while director of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, and he knew that such a county-wide group of citizens could help the new library system in many ways.

Though expressed in different words over the years, the threepart mission of the Friends of the Library has always been to focus public attention on the library, to stimulate the use of library resources and services, and to support the library's development.

The Friends of the Library began with an organizational meeting at the Maumee Branch Library soon after Naylor arrived in Toledo. Zeke Cook and Ann Weaver were the first president and vice president, respectively. Completing the group's organization and conducting a drive to collect records for a new library collection were early tasks.

In 1973, the Friends of the Library began to organize FOL chapters at each of the branch libraries, recognizing that many patrons only used their local branch and wanted to be an official Friend there. The Sylvania Branch of the Friends was the first, founded in 1973. The Sanger Branch chapter was formed in 1974; Birmingham, Kent, and Reynolds Corners chapters were formed in 1975; Mott and Oregon chapters were formed in 1976; and Heatherdowns, Maumee, Toledo Heights, Washington, and Waterville chapters were formed in 1977.

With the defeat of the proposed 0.96-mill capital improvements levy in November 1991, and using the 1991 task force report as a foundation, the library began an extensive internal strategic planning process in 1993. A Strategic Plan Task Force, with representatives from virtually every library agency and job classification, examined many current operations, facilities, and future needs.

By 1995, a growing list of deficiencies had been assembled. The headline of a story that appeared in *The Blade* on February 12, 1995, highlighted the common theme of many of the needs: "Main Library a Victim of Its Popularity, Time." The article told of the library's severe space limitations for materials and the deteriorating conditions due to a lack of humidity control and an aged heating-and-air-conditioning system.

The branch libraries shared many of these same problems. Some branches had lost their meeting rooms, as the space was needed to hold books. Other meeting rooms were inaccessible to handicapped persons. The general lack of space for materials forced a "no growth" policy throughout the system, which is an intolerable situation for a public library.<sup>13</sup>

## LEVY CAMPAIGNS

One of the Friends' periodic major activities has been supporting library tax levies. One of

the organization's strongest efforts came in the 1977 campaign. They prepared for the fall campaign with an energetic membership campaign, gaining 1,280 new members for a total of 2,205 card-carrying Friends. Many of the Friends

joined other library supporters for a powerful grassroots effort to tell the library's needs to the community's voters. In the 1982 levy renewal campaign, Friends of the Library donated \$14,000 to the campaign treasury, with FOL volunteers placing yard signs and distributing literature door-to-door. The Friends of the Library have led the way in individual and financial support in every subsequent library campaign.

#### PROGRAMS

In the fall of 1982, the Friends of the Library presented James C. Humes' one-man show about Winston Churchill at Lourdes College. The

near-capacity crowd enjoyed Humes' rare blend of lecture on and personification of the English prime minister.

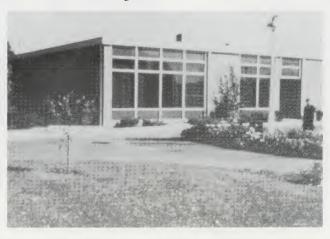
Programs in 1983 included Allan Eckert, the noted writer of historical narratives, such as "The Frontiersman," and naturalist works. The Sanger Branch Library chapter also presented nationally famous mystery writer William X. Kienzle to an appreciative audience.

In 1983, the Ohio Friends of the Library presented the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library FOL Chapter with one of only two Achievement Awards given that year. The citation

noted the many successful activities of the Friends since its organization, including its historical calendar, sponsorship of many programs, and fundraising efforts.

Also in 1983, the Friends won an award from an international association of printers for its historical calendar, based on its high quality and its unique use of historical resources.

In 1984, the Friends' annual meeting and public program featured retired Air Force Colonel Ralph Albertazzie, former pilot of *Air Force One* and author of *The Flying White House*. Also at the annual meeting, the Friends established the Dorothy Satre Memorial Service Award to commemorate the years of dedicated service by Dorothy Satre of the West Toledo Branch Library chapter. The 1984 recipient was Franklin Hawkins, Reynolds Corners FOL Chapter and former Friends president.



The old Sylvania Branch Library before the 1990 remodeling.



Youngsters at an activity in the Main Library's Children's Room.

#### ACTIVITIES

One of the early projects of the newly formed Friends of the Library was soliciting donations of phonograph records from citizens, which gained several thousand records to help begin the new service at the Main Library in 1971.

Probably the oldest Friends fundraising activity is conducting book sales. Stretching at least back to the mid-1970s, these sales of withdrawn library materials and donated items have become an inherent part of the Friends story. Described as "recycling" of the highest order, the several-times-annually sales enable book lovers to add selected items to their own collections at very economical prices. The large sales were staged in several Main Library areas, including the Central Court, the Literature Department, and the former meeting room on the second floor. Most recently, the major sales have occurred at the Kenwood Annex (former Sanger Branch Library building) on West Central Avenue.

Over the years, hundreds of Friends volunteers have given thousands of hours of dedicated service to the sales, and preparing for the sales, so that local readers can buy books. These sales, including many fine, smaller sales at branch libraries, provide funds for a wide variety of Friends and library activities for children and adults throughout the year.

The FOL historical calendar began in 1982 and continued as a project for more than a decade. Volunteers from the Friends researched old issues of *The* 

Blade newspaper for the area history facts that were listed for each day of the year. Each month's two-page spread also featured an attention-getting historical photograph from the library's local history photograph collection. Several thousand copies were sold each year at library locations and selected local stores. Some people made a point of collecting each year's issue, and many copies were sent to former Toledo-area residents living elsewhere in the country and around the world.

In 1989, A Store of Friends opened in the Central Court of the Main Library. This was a welcomed addition for patrons of the Main Library. The store, staffed by Friends volunteers, offered new and used books for sale, as well as puzzles, children's games, and

assorted merchandise of interest to patrons. The store also stocked "convenience items," such as paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps that library users frequently need.

Peace, love, and the Smothers Brothers at the Main Library's Record Department.



Children's activities continue to be an important part of library programming.

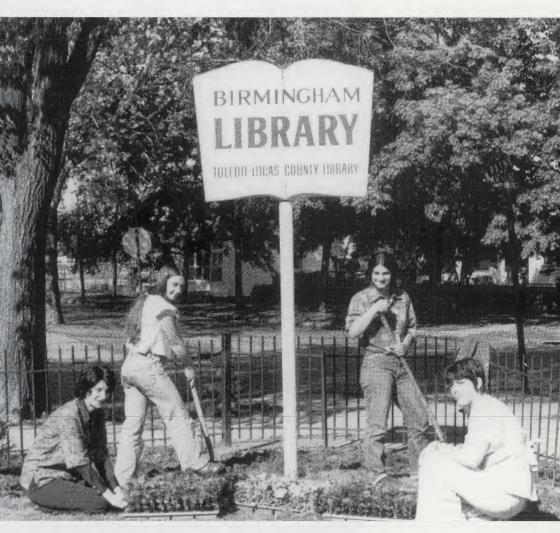




Above: The old Oregon Branch Library.

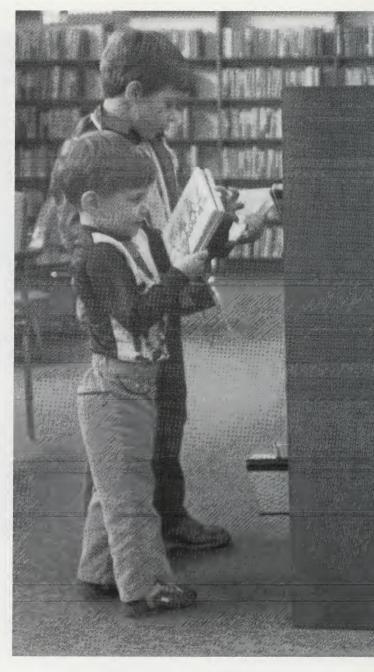
Right: The Washington Branch Library, circa 1977.





Beautifying the Birmingham Branch Library.

Children browse at the Oregon Branch Library.





ONE COUNTY, ONE SYSTEM, 1971-1994



Above: Patrons browse the Literature Department in the Historic Main Library, which is now the teen library.

Right: Taking books home is the best part of a trip to the library.





A young adult browses periodicals at the former Jermain Branch Library. Jermain was one of the Carnegie libraries.

Below: Checking out some books at the old Lagrange—Central Branch Library.

Next two pages: Central Court is a hotbed of activity during the holiday season.









Above: The former Ottawa Hills Branch Library now houses an elementary school.

Right: The Holland Branch Library opened in May of 1984.



INFORMATION REVOLUTION



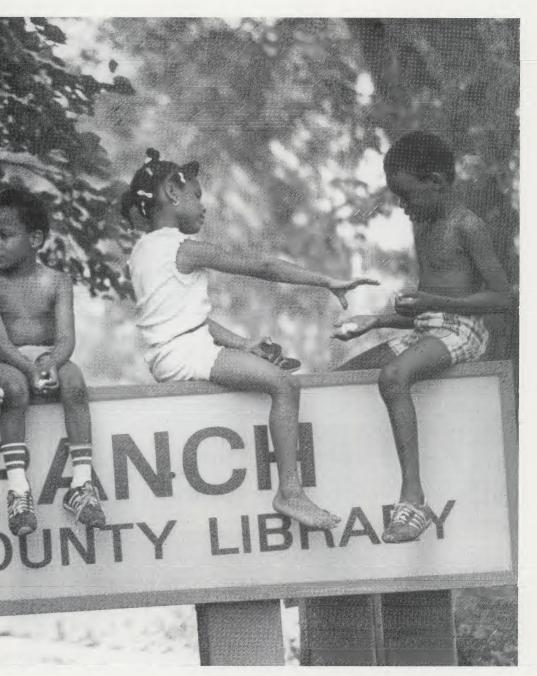
Left: The Toledo Heights Branch Library celebrates its fiftieth anniversary on July 13, 1985.

Below: Lois Waffle, whose name is now emblazoned on the Waterville Branch Library, helps a young patron in July of 1983.

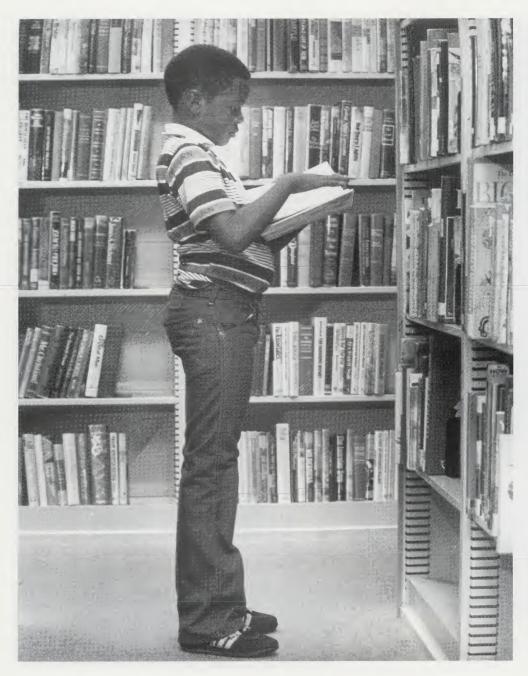


ONE COUNTY, ONE SYSTEM, 1971-1994





ONE COUNTY, ONE SYSTEM, 1971-1994







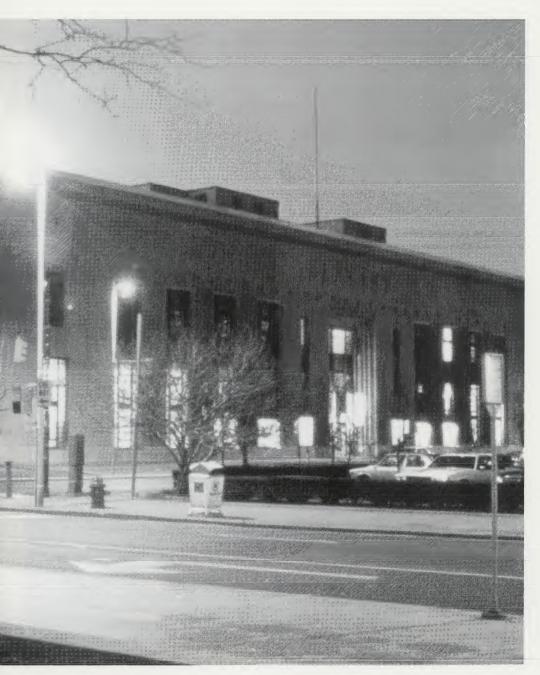
Above: Reaching out to the community, the Children's Department takes storytime on the road to the Crosby Gardens Fall Fest, 1986.

Left: Patrons enjoy the new Washington Branch Library.

Main Library stands as a beacon of knowledge and information in the downtown Toledo night.



INFORMATION REVOLUTION



ONE COUNTY, ONE SYSTEM, 1971-1994



Above: The Main Library always draws a crowd for the Summer Reading Club.

Right: A crowd gathers for a relaxing Brown Bag Concert at the Main Library.







Above: Clowning around at the Main Library.

Left: Book Buddy greets young readers on the north lawn of the Main Library.



Above: The renovated and expanded Heatherdowns Branch Library.

Right: The renovated and expanded Mott Branch Library.



The renovated and and remodeled Kent Branch Library.







Above: The new Reynolds Corners Branch Library.

Left: The renovated and expanded Reynolds Corners Branch Library.







 $Workers \ three \ stories \ above \ the \ new \ addition \ to \ Main \ Library \ install \ glass \ for \ the \ Wintergarden.$ 

# CHAPTER 6

# IntomTwenty-First Century 1995-2001

THE 1995 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS

THE VOTERS' REJECTION OF THE 1991 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LEVY was a great disappointment. The present and foreseeable needs of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library did not disappear with that defeat, however. Library supporters decided that the need for a capital improvements program had been inadequately explained to the community. The need had to be explained again, with greater clarity and emphasis, as the library continued its daily operations.

During the next four years, the library sought to educate its patrons and the community in general about the many cases of inadequate space and the aged infrastructures at both the branches and the Main Library. Informational flyers specific to individual branches and stories in the local news media helped convey the growing pressure for capital improvements. Internally, the library reevaluated its physical facilities and predictable space needs for future resources and services, as well as possible organizational changes to provide the best possible public service.

After a two-year public education effort, the library went back to the voters with a revised capital improvements plan. Under the proposed plan, about one-half of the funds would go toward a major expansion of the Main Library,



Packing up . . . The Local History
Department, which found a home at the
old Point Place Branch Library, was the
first to move out of the Historic Main
Library. The department returned to a
renovated area in July of 2001.

and the other portion would be divided among the eighteen branch libraries for a variety of branch-specific needs. At the November 1995 general election, 73 percent of voters approved a ten-year \$38.6 million capital improvements bond issue. This was great news for the cause of public library service in Lucas County. It meant that the voters clearly supported the proposed upgrades and wanted their library to be prepared for the new century. While there is much more to good library service than buildings and infrastructure, "Good facilities foster good library service. The most functional library building is conveniently designed for patrons, well constructed, climate

controlled, and offers adequate, well-lit parking." Passage of the 1995 levy guaranteed that the financial means would be present for the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library to prepare its facilities for the twenty-first century.

# THE MAIN LIBRARY CAPITAL PROJECT TAKES SHAPE

By August 1996, the team of design and construction experts was in place to implement the voter-approved plan. The well-known Toledo architectural firm of Munger Munger + Associates Architects, Inc., with many regional libraries among their list of impressive accomplishments, was selected as the project architects for the Main Library capital project. Design Group, Inc., of Columbus, Ohio, served as a consultant to Munger Munger on some aspects of the project, focusing its own extensive experience in library design for the good of the project. Rudolph/Libbe of Walbridge, Ohio, was chosen as the construction manager for the project because of a strong record of monitoring complex projects for the best combination of costs versus benefits. Robert Martin, a well-regarded retired local architect, was hired as the library's special construction liaison regarding capital projects.

One early major event in the Main Library capital project was the purchase of additional land behind the current building, across Tenth Street. In December of 1996, the library announced the acquisition of seven properties along Tenth Street was completed, with a total value of \$3.6 million. The additional space, and the related closing of Tenth Street between Madison

Avenue and Adams Street, provided the total space necessary to ensure the Main Library's capital plan truly met all of the needs of the patrons and the library. The key here is space: make most of the collection directly available to

the public, ensure that the addition preserves and honors the architectural integrity of the historic Main Library building, and ensure that the entire Main Library complex will have the flexibility and capability to meet the information needs of the county's twenty-first-century citizens.<sup>2</sup>

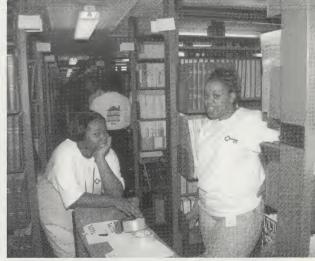
As demolition of the buildings along Tenth Street progressed, the design plans for the Main Library project were presented to the public on February 18, 1998. In his opening remarks, Library Director Clyde Scoles set an important tone when he characterized the project as "a proclamation that the people of Lucas County are giving themselves a gift!" This sentiment also was expressed on a large sign at the corner of Adams Street and Michigan Street, as it described the work going on in the background as "the community's gift to itself for the twenty-first century." A four-color brochure, a computer-generated "virtual tour" of the historic building and a new wing, and a large three-dimensional model each presented the new design and its many features.

The design was the culmination of several years of research and collection of data. One obvious constituency was the Main Library patrons, current and future. The library reviewed earlier public surveys for public comments and sponsored a series of new focus groups for qualitative and anecdotal input as well. One focus group was composed of youngsters to ensure the new library included features attractive to them.

Library trustees, staff members, and the architects traveled to nearly a dozen other metropolitan libraries that had been recently expanded and/or renovated. Among the libraries visited were the Columbus Metropolitan, the Cleveland Public,

and the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Libraries in Ohio, the Denver Public Library, and the Los Angeles and San Francisco Public Libraries.

Yet, another major facet of the planning process was internal and involved two major issues. First, staff members had to determine the best layout for





Community volunteers help pack the Main Library collection.



Above and facing page: The Vitrolite glass murals remain a hallmark of Historic Main Library's architectural features. The murals were delicately preserved during construction.

materials, equipment, and furniture for their respective departments and their patrons in the new quarters. For all of these existing resources, they had to estimate what new items would need to be accommodated and how large their collections would grow in future decades. The second issue was reorganization of the subject departments. Traditionally, the movement into new quarters or the opening of a major addition was deemed the best time for such action. When the Toledo Public Library gained more space in the King Block, when the Toledo Public Library's large annex was added in 1915, and when the Toledo Public Library moved into the "new" Main Library in 1940, there was almost total departmental reorganization.

The goals of this most recent reorganization were to combine subjects for greater patron convenience, space utilization, and staff service. The major result was the formation of two new, larger subject departments. The Business–Technology Department will include the Dewey classifications of 000, 100–300, and 500–600, and thus absorb the former Business, Science–Technology, and Social Science Departments. The Humanities Department will include the Dewey classifications of 400 and 700–900, and thereby combine the former Art–Music–Sports, Literature, and History–Travel–Biography Departments. The Business–Technology and Humanities Departments will be permanently located in the new wing.



There were several other departmental changes as well. All nonprint resources were combined into a new Audio-Visual Department, temporarily in the new wing but ultimately on the first floor of the historic Main Library building. Another new department, the Popular/Teen Library, will also occupy part of the historic building's first floor. Well located for easy access, patrons will be able to find copies of new bestsellers in all fiction genres and nonfiction subject areas. Teens will have a special area nearby for their own use as well.

The Children's Library will be a greatly expanded children's space on the second floor of the historic Main Library, and the Local History and Genealogy Department will return to its permanent home on the third floor, occupying much enlarged and improved quarters, including a Rare Book Room.

The official groundbreaking for the Main Library capital project occurred on Sunday, March 8, 1998. Despite a cold rain, several hundred library supporters gathered in and about a tent fortuitously erected behind Main on Tenth Street. In brief remarks, Director Scoles quoted the words of President James Madison, which are inscribed by the entrance of the Library of Congress: "A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their



A Russian pianist performs in the Central Court, August of 1999, only weeks before the staff began moving materials out of the Main Library.

own governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." The short program culminated with library trustees, staff members, city and county elected officials, project architects, construction managers, and citizens of all ages wielding shovels and ceremoniously turning the first soil.

Following the groundbreaking, *The Blade* editorialized, "Its going to be a jewel. Nothing else adequately describes what is about to take shape at the Main Toledo–Lucas County Public Library downtown. . . . All in all, the new Main Library will be a stunning addition to Toledo and an impressive reward to voters for their wisdom in supporting the 1995 bond issue."

The Main Library's expansion reached a virtual and figurative high point on June 9, 1999, with the traditional "topping off" ceremony. The climax of the noontime event was when several hundred people watched a crane raise a pine tree and an American flag to the highest point of the new wing. The "topping off" ceremony is an ancient tradition. The American flag symbolizes respect and gratitude to the American construction workers whose skill and efforts make these projects a reality. The tree represents the natural resources that go into the project. The Friends of the Library served free hot dogs, chips, cookies, and punch to the crowd.

Once the new wing was completed, the next major task was for the library to occupy it. Staff planning for "the move" began more than a year earlier, as departments decided the location for their resources in the new wing and judged items that did not deserve to be moved. Adding to the complexity of this planning, some departments, such as Visual Services and Local History, had to move to temporary locations, either in the new wing or out of the building, and only returned when the historic building was renovated. Ultimately, the planning resulted in a process that made the best use of staff, carts, routes, and time.

Most of the staff anticipated the move and, once it was actually underway, closely resembled an army of ants at work. As such, it was no surprise when "Atlas Ant" became the official move mascot and appeared on T-shirts, signs, and placards.

Some preliminary moving began in early February 2000, with the tempo increasing to full measure once the Main Library closed to the public on February 28 and all of the staff could concentrate on what had been simply called "the move." The target date for reopening the Main Library was Monday, March 27—and it was met!

The new wing features patron-friendly parking in an underground lot, which eliminates the shortage of convenient parking at the Main Library. Other assets include a multilevel atrium, or Wintergarden, that links the addition to the historic building, a small group meeting rooms and quiet study areas, the high-tech McMaster Family Center for Lifelong Learning, and the park-like Civic Plaza on the rooftop. Most importantly, the expanse of the new addition allows the great majority of the Main Library's vast collection to be directly accessible to patrons.<sup>4</sup>

The Commissioners' Plaza, adjacent to Madison Avenue, served as the temporary public entrance to the new wing while the historic building was closed for renovation. The plaza, whose primary purpose is to provide a safe entrance for school groups and other special events, leads into the Wintergarden between the historic building and the new wing. Funded with a \$300,000 donation from the Lucas County Commissioners, the Commissioners' Plaza was dedicated Saturday, April 15, 2000.

#### THE MAIN LIBRARY UNDERGOES PHASE TWO

The renovation of the historic Main Library building will transform it from a structure of the 1940s into an information center for the new millennium. While many improvements and upgrades to portions of the building have occurred over the years, phase two of the capital improvement plan will be a comprehensive treatment of its infrastructure and public service layout. Visitors to the historic building will once again see the unique Vitrolite glass murals, restored to enduring beauty, and other art deco features that make the

building so distinctive. Yet, they also will be able to enjoy the new patronfriendly layout and the new enhancements, such as A Store of Friends and the refreshments area. The "new" Main Library will become a downtown destination for both enlightenment and enjoyment.

## THE BRANCH LIBRARIES' CAPITAL PROJECTS PROCEED

Capital projects at the branches got underway quickly after the voters gave the green flag in November 1995. By the end of 1998, projects at six branches, one-third of the branch network, were completed: Heatherdowns' parking was expanded, Kent was renovated, Mott was renovated and



For a really big library, you need a really big hole. The new addition to the Main Library extends across Tenth Street in downtown Toledo, the former site of various small businesses.

expanded, Oregon's parking was enlarged, Reynolds Corners' parking was increased and the entrance relocated, and Sylvania gained quiet study space. By the start of 2000, the list of completed branch projects included a new Point Place Branch building (1999) and the renovated and enlarged Toledo Heights Branch (1999).

The new Sanger Branch Library opened for business on March 20, 2000. Patrons were standing at the door that first day, eager to enter the 19,200-square foot building at 3030 West Central Avenue.

The renovation and expansion of the Maumee Branch Library, formerly the

headquarters of the Lucas County Library system at 501 River Road in Maumee, was judged to be the most complicated library capital project, second only to the Main Library. Site-related factors, community concerns, the fact that the current building was actually a series of additions to the original Carnegie-funded structure, and the needs of the future combined to truly challenge planning for a new design. Citizens' issues and questions were heard in a series of public meetings stretching over more than a year, and several plan variations were developed and evaluated. The project ultimately began when the current Maumee Branch Library closed to the public on April 3, 2000, so that the actual site work could commence, and the official groundbreaking occurred on Saturday, July 22.

The new branch design blends the original Carnegie building and auditorium, with new construction that expands public service space from 8,000 square feet to nearly 20,000. That space will be on one level (a great improvement over the former multilevels now in the public areas) and will include a new quiet study room, a casual reading area, a new teen area, a new children's area, an upgraded infrastructure, and a general refurbishment of the building.

The Friends of the Library Maumee Chapter is funding an outdoor Friends Reading Garden, a garden that will provide a quiet community space among the flowers and the trees, with the sound of water bubbling.

A closely related aspect of the Maumee Branch Library project was moving the library's Special Services Department, which it could no longer accommodate, to a new home. The department includes not only the usual library-type materials and equipment, but also two bookmobiles and the need for extensive book storage, thus requiring an extensive search for a new home. Ultimately, the library purchased the former Sight Center building at 1819 Canton Avenue on the edge of downtown Toledo. The facility offers the mix of capabilities that the Special Services Department needs, and it should prove an effective headquarters for some time.

#### TECHNOLOGY BECOMES EVEN MORE DOMINANT

As stated in the library's 1999 annual report, "Technology is the new story in public libraries today. In the last several decades, informational technolo-

gies have affected virtually every one of this Library's audiences. In some uses, it simply helps the Library do a better job of providing traditional service. For example, patrons and staff members can track down a desired book, video, etc., throughout the system or around the world. In other ways, technology offers us information that could never have been accessed in any other way."6

In 1995, TIGER, the library's "Toledo's Information Gateway to Electronic Resources," became available via dial-in from computers outside the library.

Without fees or membership charges, TIGER now makes the following available:

- Bibliographic information from 13,000 journals in science, technology, medicine, business, humanities, and popular culture
- Full-text access to 800 journals
- Access to Internet resources

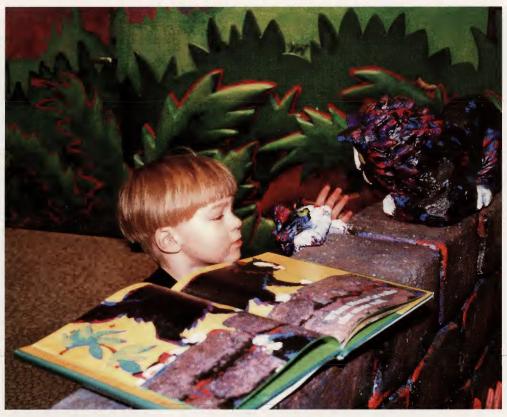
The printed word and the digital age were recently combined in "Rocket Books," hand-held devices about the size of a traditional book that hold up to fifty full-length books. The library established a collection of Rocket Books at the Main Library on November 16, 2000. Initially each Rocket Book contained a variety of fiction and nonfiction titles, as well as a built-in dictionary. The electronic books enable individual readers to adjust the size of onscreen



Expansion of the Main Library progresses over an exciting and productive three-year period.









Above: A young patron explores the Children's Reading Park at the Sanger Branch Library.

Left: On the cutting edge of technology, the library added electronic books in 2000, offering patrons dozens of selections to fit in the palm of their hand.

Facing page top and bottom:
Families enjoy the Children's Reading
Park at the Sanger Branch Library,
modeled after the works of local author
Denise Fleming.



The skeletal structure of Main Library's new addition added artful interest to the downtown Toledo landscape.

print, search for selected names or terms, and make electronic notes. One major stimulus for the electronic books was the recent "publication" of popular writer Stephen King's *Riding the Bullet* in electronic form only.

# RESOURCES AND SERVICES GROW

Three important additions came in the mid-1990s:

- In 1995, the "Grab Bag of Books" was instituted, which is a service that allows parents to stop by a convenient library location and pick up a canvas bookbag of six preselected children's books. This helps busy parents who frequently find it difficult to make time for selecting books for their youngsters.
- To aid families in developing "the library habit" together, the hours of the Children's Room at the Main Library were extended into the evening, matching the hours of the rest of the building.
- Also in 1995, and in support of the business community, the library became a satellite of the Detroit Public Library's new Great Lakes Patent and Trademark Center. Done in cooperation with the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office, this effort improves the ability of local library users to search all of the patents and trademarks in the United States.

In 1999, a new digital format was introduced at the Main Library—DVDs, or digital video disks. The collection's initial 300 titles at the Main

Library nearly doubled within the year, reflecting the format's popularity and that there were more players in local homes and offices. Later in the year,

DVD collections also were in place at the branch libraries.<sup>7</sup>

Also in 1999, there were more than 280,000 registered borrowers at the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library (more than 58 percent of the county's total population). In that same year, more than 3.7 million people visited library locations, including more than 400,000 at the Main Library; over 1.5 million people "visited" the library via its electronic portal on the Internet; and 1999 was the



Library Legacy Foundation President Jamie Black and his wife, Ellen, stand atop the Civic Plaza during construction.

fourth year in a row that patrons borrowed over six million items.8

### THE LIBRARY LINKS TO THE INTERNET

The spread of computer-based technology is an uneven flow. Certain categories of households are much more likely to have computers and access to the Internet than are other homes. This difference leads to "haves" and "have nots" in the Information Age, where access to online information is a major advantage. The library's mission of providing equal access to all of its resources directly confronts this "digital divide," which comes with growing technology. Ever since this library placed computers for public use and provided Internet access in 1996, it has worked to be a portal to the Information Superhighway for those lacking computers at their homes, schools, or businesses. These efforts received a major boost in 1999, when the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gave the library a \$104,300 grant to fight this inequity. The Gates grant funded the purchase of forty computers and ten printers, and the grant stipulated that the computers and printers go into library locations serving neighborhoods with below-average computer access.9

The Internet has become the information resource of first choice for many computer-literate information seekers, especially among teenagers and younger children. The Internet literally offers a world of information and entertainment. It has put worldwide resources within the reach of any computer that can access the World Wide Web.

At the same time, the millions of sites on the Internet include a small percentage that most people would label as not suitable for children. In 1999, the library instituted the Youth Internet Card, with the objective of giving parents more specific control of their children's use of the Internet at the library. In a



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INFORMATION REVOLUTION





Above: State-of-the-art technology is one of the most valuable offerings of libraries.

Left: Free Internet access and free Internet training classes are offered at all libraries in Lucas County.

INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, 1995-2001

letter mailed to the parents of all 83,000 minors with a Toledo–Lucas County Public Library card, the library asked parents to sign a permission slip if they wished their child to view the Internet at the library. Minors having such parental permission are given a special card that must be displayed on the computer they are using to access the Internet.<sup>10</sup>

# THE LIBRARY LEGACY FOUNDATION ASSUMES A MAJOR ROLE

The cause of public library service in Lucas County has attracted philanthropic support over the years from individuals, organizations, and the business sector. Private support, via membership dues, was certainly necessary for the Young Men's Association Library and the Toledo Library Association. Since the Toledo Public Library began in 1873, donated books have helped over the years.

The most significant private contribution in the early years was Andrew Carnegie's donation that funded the construction of five branch libraries in Toledo and the original library in Maumee. Local philanthropy continued shortly thereafter, and the gifts demonstrated a variety of support. For example, in 1927, the Toledo Polish Socialist Association disbanded and turned over its treasury of about \$2,800 to the Toledo Public Library for the purchase of Polish books."

During 1925 and 1926, six local glass companies donated \$1,350 to establish a special collection on glass. Also during the 1920s, the Friends of the Toledo Public Library presented 1,398 books to the library. Over the next seventy years, thousands of Lucas County residents, organizations, and companies donated books, other materials, program underwriting, and in-kind support.

In 1989, under the leadership of library trustees Robert Carlile and John F. Hayward, the Library Legacy Foundation was created to be the designated organization to receive future philanthropic donations. It also would represent the library in the community for the purpose of soliciting further donations that would enhance the core operations of the county's public library.

Since its creation, the Library Legacy Foundation has steadily increased its support for the library. Funds have been raised for programs like the Summer Reading Club, the Brown Bag Concerts, the Main Library's Sunday Hours, and a "Realms of King Arthur" event. Memorial and tribute gifts have added hundreds of new books to the library collection, and the Foundation has supported the "Authors! Authors!" series since its beginning in 1993 as well.

In 1997, the library presented the foundation with a unique opportunity to take its level of support to an entirely new level. In conjunction with the library capital projects, the foundation conducted a capital fundraising cam-

paign that brought nearly \$4 million in enhancements to the Main Library project. This campaign increased the visibility and credibility of both the foundation and the library as worthy recipients of charitable gifts.

On July 13, 1999, Harold and Helen McMaster, local philanthropists, presented \$850,000 to the library via the foundation, which was the largest cash gift ever received by the library. The donation enabled the construction of the McMaster Family Lifelong Learning Center, a multimedia, 300-seat auditorium on the rooftop of the new wing at the Main Library. Harold McMaster recalled his early use of the Main Library's technology resources in the 1940s during the check presentation ceremony, and he concluded his remarks by saying that he and his wife wished to guarantee technology at the library that all future generations will find helpful. The center was officially dedicated on Friday, June 16, 2000.<sup>13</sup>

Further foundation support of the capital project came on January 28, 2000, when the foundation presented a \$1 million check to the library board of trustees. This contribution helped fund the new wing's rooftop Civic Plaza, the interior accents, and the exterior quotations and seals. The foundation presented a second \$1 million check for the Main Library's capital project in December 2000.

## THE 1997 OPERATING LEVY CAMPAIGN

The potential strengthening of the library due to the 1995 capital improvements levy would have been largely unrealized if the community had not continued to support regular operations as well. Again indicating its understanding of the library's role in the community, an overwhelming majority of voters approved a ten-year 1.0-mill replacement operating levy in November 1997. That commitment ensured predictable and continuing daily funding of the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library for the next ten years, the perfect environment for the improvements coming with capital funding.

# THE HENNEN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY RATING INDEX

In 1998, the library learned that it was ranked the eighteenth best public library serving a metropolitan area by the Hennen American Public Library Rating Index, first issued that year. The index compares more than 7,000 public libraries across the country on the basis of fifteen statistical measures. The variables include budget size, collection size and usage, staffing, circulation, and public usage. The Hennen ranking is the only such evaluative comparison for U. S. public libraries.





Above: Construction of an underground parking area was a priority in planning Main Library's expansion.

Facing page: Structural details show the curve of the Wintergarden in front of today's McMaster Lobby on the second floor of the Main Library.



Above: The new addition at the Main Library starts to take shape.







INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, 1995-2001





In 1999, the Toledo–Lucas County Public Library scored well for the second consecutive year in Hennen's Index; the library placed seventh among libraries serving populations of 250,000 to 499,000 people. Library Director Scoles credited the high showing to the large number of registered borrowers who use the library and to the library employees who are the vital connecting link between residents and library resources. He also attributed the success to a good working relationship between the library and the local governments, other nonprofit organizations, and the business community.<sup>14</sup>

The library's high ranking in the Hennen Index continued for a third year, when it maintained its seventh place in the 2000 edition of the rating report for metropolitan areas with 250,000 to 499,000 people. Toledo was in good company, for Ohio ranked as number one among all fifty states in terms of having strong libraries, and many other Ohio libraries of all sizes were included in Hennen's ten different population categories.

## THE LIBRARY MOVES INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Many generations of Lucas County residents have made great use of their libraries since this story began in 1838. In whatever institutional embodiment it has taken over the decades, "the library" has helped adults and children become formally educated, expand their personal interests, and experience the power and pleasure of reading, listening, and watching for personal recreation. Simultaneously, library patrons and supporters have enabled the library to shape it services and resources to better fulfill its mission toward the community. This strong, mutual relationship is perhaps the strongest and most important theme in the story of public library service in Lucas County. Long may it persist and become even stronger!

Celebrating the holidays in the Wintergarden in December of 2000.

Previoust two pages: A dash of greenery produces a breathtaking view of the Wintergarden and the McMaster Lobby.





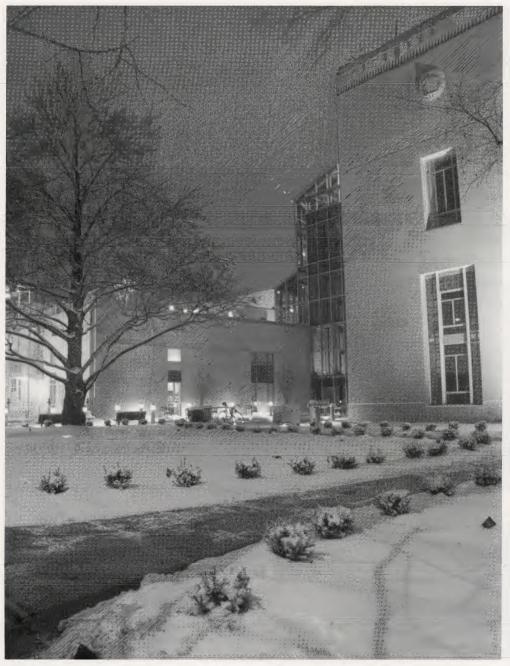
Above: Potted plants and trees line the walkways of the Main Library's rooftop Civic Plaza.

Right: The art deco features of the Historic Main Library were carried over to the new addition.





INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, 1995-2001







The new addition at the Main Library earned a CityScape Award for lighting.





The state-of-the-art McMaster Family Center for Lifelong Learning offers global videoconferencing. Library mascot Book Buddy hits a home run with readers young and old.





Left: Library Foundation President Jamie Black presents a \$1 million donation to Library Board of Trustees President John F. Hayward for enhancements to all libraries in Lucas County.





Above: Deputy Director Margaret Danziger presents an award to a library volunteer. In 2000, 744 individuals volunteered a total of 17,012 hours; 488 of the volunteers were ages 12 to 18. The residents of Lucas County have volunteered their time to the library for decades, helping to provide numerous programs and assistance for patrons.



Above: Harold and Helen McMaster, pictured in the front row, donated \$850,000 to transform the Main Library into a twenty-first-century technological marvel. Pictured with Mr. and Mrs. McMaster are Jamie Black, John Hayward, and Clyde Scoles.

Left: Library Director Clyde Scoles was appointed in 1985.

The renovated Maumee Branch Library, one of the Carnegie libraries, offers visitors a panoramic entryway and expanded technology offerings.





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